United Nations A/55/373

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 September 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 85
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Note by the Secretary-General*

The General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, adopted resolution 54/76 on the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, in which, among other matters, it requested the Special Committee:

(a) Pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli lack of compliance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;

(b) To submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem;

(c) To continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

* In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/248, section C, paragraph 1, this report is being submitted on 11 September 2000 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

00-63932 (E) 111000

The Special Committee, as in previous years, reports to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General.

The attached periodic report of the Special Committee covers the period from 21 August 1999 to 29 February 2000.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–5	4
II.	Situation of human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories: Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem	6–160	4
	A. General introductory observation	6	4
	B. Conditions that are restrictive with respect to Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem	7–82	4
	1. Restriction relating to land, housing and water	7–60	4
	2. Restrictions affecting movement of Palestinians within, between, and their exit from and re-entry into the occupied territories	61–82	15
	C. Manner of implementation of restrictions	83–130	19
	1. Checkpoints	83–84	19
	2. Interrogation procedures	85–99	20
	3. Administrative detention and conditions of detention	100–103	23
	4. Imprisonment and conditions of imprisonment	104–114	24
	5. Question of the use of force	115–129	26
	6. Proposed law absolving persons of liability to compensate	130	28
	D. Economic, social and cultural effects that such a general system of regulation and the manner of its enforcement has on the lives of the people of the occupied territories	131–134	28
	E. General sense of hopelessness and despair	135–160	29
III.	Situation of human rights in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan	161–171	33

I. Introduction

1. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 2443 of 19 December 1968.

2. The Committee is composed of three Member States appointed by the President of the General Assembly. The members of the Committee are presently: John de Saram, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations (Chairman); Absa Claude Diallo, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Office at Geneva; and Datuk Hasmy Agam, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations.

3. The Committee held its fist session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 16 to 17 March 2000, and among other matters considered and adopted its first periodic report to the General Assembly, covering the period 21 August 1999 to 29 February 2000.

4. The first periodic report of the Committee contains, as in previous years, a summary of articles appearing in the newspapers *Ha'aretz* and the *Jerusalem Post* published in Israel, with reference to the occupied territories, and articles appearing in the *Jerusalem Times* published in the occupied territories within the terms of reference of the Special Committee.

5. As in previous years, the present report is submitted to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General.

II. Situation of human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories: Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

A. General introductory observation

6. The passages below are essentially summaries of newspaper reports in which certain references are maintained, as in past years, with a view to setting the context for the observations made.

B. Conditions that are restrictive with respect to Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

1. Restriction relating to land, housing and water

Land

7. On 4 September 1999, Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat signed in Sharm el-Sheikh an agreement for a timetable for implementation of the Wye River Memorandum, originally negotiated and signed late the previous year by Barak's predecessor, former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. By the end of the five-month process laid down in the new agreement, Palestinians would control 41 per cent of the West Bank. Jordanian King Abdullah II, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright witnessed the signing ceremony. According to the new agreement, within a few days the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) were to redeploy from 7 per cent of the West Bank, transferring it from Israeli control (Area C) to Palestinian civilian control (Area B), and release 200 Palestinian security prisoners. Two more withdrawals were to take place on 15 November 1999 and 20 January 2000, and another batch of approximately 150 more security prisoners was to be released on 8 October 1999. According to the new agreement, within the coming weeks, negotiating teams would be established and would begin intensive talks on a final peace accord. The target date for reaching the final-status deal was set for 13 September 2000. On 15 November 1999, a 2 per cent transfer of West Bank territory was to be made from Area B to Area A (full Palestinian control) and 3 per cent was to be transferred from Area C to Area B. On 20 January 2000, a 1 per cent transfer was to take place from Area C to Area A and 5.1 per cent from Area B to Area A. The southern "safe passage" route was to be opened on 1 October, while construction of the Gaza seaport was to commence on the same day. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 5 September)

8. On 10 September 1999, the first stage of Israeli redeployment in the West Bank under the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum was completed. Seven per cent of Area C was converted into the status of Area B, where Israel controls security and the Palestinians exercise civilian control. This brought the total area under Palestinian civilian or civilian-security control to

36 per cent of the West Bank (about 5,500 square kilometres). Meanwhile, meetings were to be held on 13 September, at the headquarters of the Civil Administration in Beit El, between Israeli and Palestinian Authority officers, during which 16 civil authorities were to be formally transferred to the Palestinians. IDF stated that the first stage of the redeployment had been relatively easy and had incurred few security implications, but that the coming stages, scheduled for October 1999 and January 2000, would be more complicated. They would involve handing over extensive areas of the West Bank to Palestinian security control and turning a few settlements into isolated enclaves accessible through a corridor that will remain under Israeli control. (*Ha'aretz*, 13 September)

9. On 21 September 1999, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat stated that Israel had so far implemented the terms of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum to the letter, and told reporters that the Israeli side had implemented the first phase precisely and well. He reiterated, however, that Palestinians were seeking a land-for-peace deal that would also guarantee the return of Palestinian refugees and lands that Israel had captured in 1967, including East Jerusalem. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 September)

10. On 27 September, it was reported, according to Palestinian sources, that IDF had recently closed off 23,000 dunams of land belonging to the Arab villages of Beit Ula and Idna, west of Hebron. IDF, on the other hand, claimed that no new territories had been closed off, but rather that the recent closure orders were simply an update of previous closures in the wake of the recent redeployment. The territories in question were close to the Green Line and bordered the designated "safe passage" from Gaza to Tarkumiya. Despite the IDF explanation, experts in the Hebron municipality were standing by their opinion that the territories had only recently been closed. Approximately 200 families lived in the areas in question, making their living from agriculture and livestock. The orders and warnings which were delivered had given rise to fear among the inhabitants that all of them would be removed from the area. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 September)

11. On 21 November, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators failed again to reach a deal on the dispute pullback from 5 per cent of the West Bank. According to the Palestinian negotiators, the dispute focused on the principle of who would decide on the maps. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 November)

12. On 19 December, it was reported that a meeting between Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Ehud Barak, scheduled for the same day, had been postponed. No official reason was given for the postponement. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, the first item on the agenda at the Arafat-Barak meeting when it took place was expected to be the matter of the 5 per cent withdrawal from the West Bank, which had been held up for over a month. Originally scheduled to take place on 15 November 1999, the Palestinians continued to reject the proposed redeployment, arguing that the lands they were to be given were barren and not contiguous. The Israeli Government, however, continue to maintain that, according to all the agreements signed, it was for Israel alone to decide on the location of the various withdrawals. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 December)

13. On 4 January 2000, it was reported that the civil administration in the West Bank would lodge a complaint with the Palestinian Authority for seriously violating the Oslo Agreement by registering land in the Bethlehem region located in Area C, under complete Israeli control, and a small portion in Area B, under Palestinian civil control and Israeli security control. According to security officials, that was the first such incident. The civil administration spokesperson stated that complaints had been received from the Jewish National Fund and others claiming that a plot in Area C had been registered by the Palestinian Authority. According to the spokesperson, a Bethlehem resident had submitted forged documents to the Palestinian Authority office, claiming ownership, and the plot had subsequently been registered in his name. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 January)

14. On 5 January, the IDF Central Command and the civil administration handed over 2 IDF bases in northern Samaria to the Palestinian Authority, implementing the second West Bank withdrawal from 5 per cent of the land in the area. Areas which had formerly encompassed four IDF bases were also handed over to the Palestinian landowners. In the coming days the IDF is said to have put up signposts indicating the entrances to Area A (under full Palestinian control) and Area B (under Palestinian civil control and Israeli security control) which had been given to the Palestinians. Most of the areas covered in the current withdrawal are in Nablus, Jenin and

Bethlehem, with 3 per cent in the Judea Desert designated (50,000 -dunams (12,500 -acre)). As a follow-up to this latest development and as an act of goodwill, the army commanders from both sides would conduct a joint patrol of areas now under Palestinian jurisdiction. The handover of civilian authority in these areas was to take place at the end of the current week after the end of Ramadan. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 6 January)

15. On 16 January, it was reported that the next West Bank redeployment, scheduled for 21 January, would not take place at that time, according to an official from the Prime Minister's office. Israel is required by the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum to transfer to the Palestinian Authority 5.1 per cent of the West Bank land classified as "B" areas (Under Israeli security control) and 1 per cent of the "C" areas (under exclusive Israeli control). After the withdrawal these areas will become "A" areas under full Palestinian control. Israel made it clear that there would be no withdrawal from the Abu Dis area, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 16 January)

Settlements

16. On 7 September, it was reported that the Government planned to reduce the budget of the World Zionist Organization's settlement department by almost 50 per cent. According to *Ha'aretz*, the settlements involved were outraged by the Government's plans. Spokespersons for the settlers stated that the decision would virtually wipe out the settlement section and dry up the settlements by halting immigration absorption, creating unemployment, cancelling complementary education programmes, halting the development of water sources and ending funding to establish social centres for youth and children. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 September)

17. On 14 September, a day after the launching of Israeli-Palestinian permanent status talks, Prime Minister Ehud Barak pledged to strengthen the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim. "We, the new Government, will continue to strengthen the State of Israel and its hold on the land of Israel and we will continue to strengthen Ma'aleh Adumim", Barak told residents. Referring to housing under construction in the town of 25,000, across the Green Line, he said: "Every house that is being built is part of the State of Israel forever, period." Meanwhile, the Peace Now movement accused the Government of increasing the average rate of tenders for settlement housing units fivefold. According to Peace Now, Housing and Construction Minister Yitzhak Levy (National Religious Party) had approved the issue of 2,604 tenders for homes in settlements since the government took office on 7 July. "Barak is not stopping Levy", said Moshe Raz, Peace Now Chairman. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 15 September)

18. On 16 September, it was reported that West Bank Jewish settlers had begun to create facts on State-owned land. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, settlers from Kedumim, Karnei Shomron and Shavei Shomron had begun implementing plans to maintain a physical presence in a 5,000-dunam (1,250 acre) area, including building hilltop encampments and patrolling the road. "We are talking about protecting 3,000 dunams of State land and 2,000 dunams of private land that has already been purchased and paid for", said Kedumim Local Council head Daniella Weiss. The Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza said it did not support these actions. Meanwhile, chief Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abass said that any permanent peace agreement must include a "complete evacuation of Jewish settlements from the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians and international community consider settlements illegal; therefore settlements should be evacuated completely. This also applies to settlements in Jerusalem." (*Jerusalem Post*, 16 September).

19. On 26 September, it was reported that the Peace Now movement had charged that the Government was encouraging Jewish settlement on the West Bank by awarding tenders for nearly 2,600 housing units. Movement leaders said they would demand that Prime Minister Barak remove all the illegal hilltop encampments established since the signing of the Wye River Memorandum and that he cancel all housing construction tenders for settlements published since the Government had come to power. Peace Now said the tenders, awarded by the Ministry of Construction and Housing since Barak had taken office in July, were more than had been awarded during Binyamin Netanyahu's three years as Prime Minister. The tenders were for 461 units in Ma'aleh Adumim, 1,089 in Betar Illit, 594 in Givat Ze'ev, 10 in Otniel, 12 in Kiryat Arba, 178 in Karnei Shomron and 185 in Har Adar. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, asked in Gaza about the latest settlement activity, told reporters: "We will inform the whole world that it is destructive to peace." Housing Minister Yitzhak Levy of the National Religious Party said the granting of permits

was in keeping with government policy. "We joined this Government on the basis of [its] basic guidelines. The basic guidelines do not mention any freezing of construction", he told Israel Radio. (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 September)

20. On 29 September, it was reported that Palestinian Authority officials were outraged at reports by the Peace Now movement that Israel had decided to issue 2,600 tenders for homes in the West Bank settlements. Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told the *Jerusalem Post* that it was surprising that Israel had issued the tenders and closed off thousands of dunams of Palestinian land for security reasons, after the two sides had just signed the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum and begun final-status talks which would determine the fate of the settlements. Erekat said that he had written a letter in protest and sent it to the Israeli and United States administrations, the United Nations Coordinator and others. (*Jerusalem Post*, 29 September)

21. On 6 October, Prime Minister Barak stated for the first time that he would review all the illegal building activity in the West Bank settlements since the call for new elections, 10 months before. "Whatever is found to be unlawful will be treated accordingly, Barak stated, and added that "we will not let anyone dictate to us by his own will what the shape of the settlement will be". Barak was speaking in response to the criticism of his Government over the past few days by a number of Palestinian Authority officials, including Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. Barak noted that the tenders granted by the Housing Ministry since July had been approved long before he had taken office and that most of them were situated around Jerusalem in a large settlement block. (*Jerusalem Post*, 7 October)

22. On 7 October, the Peace Now movement revealed that since the new Government had taken office, 106 mobile homes had been added to the 41 West Bank outposts seized by settlers following the Wye River Memorandum. According to Peace Now Secretary General Mussi Raz, there were 544 structures, including mobile homes, wooden shacks and converted shipping containers, on the 41 hilltop outposts erected by settlers at the instigation of the previous Government immediately following the signing of the Wye River Memorandum in 1998 by Prime Minister Netanyahu. A spokesperson for the Civil Administration stated that the majority of the encampments were within their overall planning schemes. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 8 October)

23. On 11 October, it was reported that Prime Minister Ehud Barak was to decide soon the fate of 42 encampments in the settlements whose legality was in question and that some were likely to be dismantled. The ministerial committee on settlements established as part of the coalition agreements had convened for the first time the previous day and had empowered Barak to decide on the encampments, which had been set up after the Wye River Memorandum and following failure to reach agreement on the issue. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 11 October)

24. On 12 October, Prime Minister Barak informed the leaders of the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza that he intended to order the evacuation of 15 outposts in the West Bank. Barak's decision had been based on recommendations of the defence establishment. "I consider settlement activity in the West Bank, which was always conducted at the behest and with the authorization of the Government, very important. But I think the law is of the utmost importance. This will come as no surprise to you. I said during the election that I would examine the situation regarding the outposts", Barak told the settlers. The defence establishment had recommended that Barak dismantle 15 of 42 outposts created by settlers in the West Bank since the Wye River Memorandum was signed. According to the defence establishment 7 of the outposts were illegal, 27 had received only partial authorization and only 8 had all the necessary approvals. The seven illegal outposts were: Horsha, Maon, Shuna, Outpost 779 (Shvut Rachel Vav), Outpost 904, Magen David and Outpost 5152. According to the defence establishment's recommendations: "Fifteen outposts will be dismantled — the 7 illegal ones and 8 others known as the 'Zelikovitch outposts'." These, including the "Gidonim" outposts east of Itamar, were never authorized by former Defence Minister Moshe Arens. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 13 October)

25. On 14 October, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak and the leaders of the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlements had reached an agreement on the evacuation of the "settlement outposts" that had been established in the West Bank illegally. According to *Ha'aretz*, under the terms of the agreement, the number of encampments slated for dismantlement/complete evacuation had been reduced from 15 to 10: Havat Maon, Mitpeh Shuna, Givat Hahyal, Shvut Rachel 8, Mitzpe Kramim, Neve Erez, Mitzpe Hagit, Area 15,

Area 25 and Givat Hayovel. It was also reported that according to that agreement, the residents of the Magen David outpost would leave and the area would become pasture land. At Tzofit, the settlers would leave and the students of military preparatory academy would remain until the end of the academic year, at which time the future of the site would be reopened for discussion. Barak agreed to freeze the situation in 3 of the 15 outposts he had decided to remove: Mitzpe Dani, Har Horsha and site 779 (Shvut Rachel 6). It was reported that the settlers at Havat Maon, south of Hebron, where a settler had been killed in an incident involving Palestinian shepherds a year earlier, had vowed to "dig in" and resist any attempt to evacuate them. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 14 October)

26. On 15 October, it was reported that settler leaders stressed that only one encampment, Neveh Kremim near Kochav Hashahr, was being dismantled, and two others temporarily, out of the total of 42 illegal encampments established since the signing of the Wye River Memorandum. According to settler leaders, the other sites were either industrial land or were without buildings or sites used for grazing, with only water towers, trailers or similar structures. The settlers stated that Mitzpe Hagit and Neveh Erez, near Ma'aleh Michmash, would be temporarily dismantled until all the necessary permits were authorized, and then residents would be allowed to return. Five encampments of the 15 originally slated for removal would remain intact, while the remaining 27 of the 42 encampments would remain as they were, settlers said. Yasser Abed Rabbo, the chief Palestinian Authority negotiator for final status talks, stated that the agreement with the settlers "legitimized theft by force". He said that the Government's agreement with the settlers council had set a "dangerous precedent". The compromise left 32 of the 42 settlement encampments in place, while making the Council responsible for evacuating the others. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 15 and 17 October)

27. On 19 October, the Council ("Yesha") of Judea, Samaria and Gaza dismantled the first outpost slated for evacuation in its agreement with the Government of Prime Minister Barak, Hill 827 (Shvut Rachel 7). The evacuation was carried out after the failure of an attempt to evacuate Hill 804 (Shvut Rachel 2), north of Ramallah, which had been scheduled to be dismantled first. The Yesha issued a statement saying that only a water tower had been dismantled and that the hilltop had been cleared "in accordance with its obligations". It did not specify when the other encampments would be removed. By the end of the week, settlers were expected to dismantle encampments at Shvut Rachel, Hirbat a Shoona near Eli, and site 26 and Plots 51 and 52 near Kiryat Arba. The evacuation of all 12 encampments, Government officials said, was expected to be completed in the coming week. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 20 October)

28. On 20 October, the unpopulated outpost of Hirbet Shouna near the West Bank settlement of Eli was evacuated without incident, according to the agreement between Prime Minister Barak and the West Bank Settlers Council. However, it was reported that "Dor Himshech", a recently formed militant settlers group established to oppose the evacuation of the outposts, had succeeded in disrupting other planned evacuations, including an attempt to evacuate Hill 804 near Shvut Rachel two days earlier. In further escalation of its anti-evacuation campaign, Dor Himshech had organized a Torah dedication ceremony and erected a wooden synagogue at Havat Maon, another outpost on the evacuation list. The ceremony was attended by some 1,000 people, among them several right-wing political and spiritual leaders. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 21 October)

29. On 21 October, the Council of Jewish Communities in the West Bank and Gaza stated that six of the settlement outposts slated for dismantlement, the ones that were not regularly inhabited, had been taken down. It was reported that the Council hoped to complete the dismantling of the other designated settlement encampments within two weeks, but Council members stressed that that depended on how quickly alternative housing arrangements could be made for the residents. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 22 October)

30. On 24 October, it was reported that an IDF proposal for the reinforcement of West Bank settlements estimated the cost at 140 million new shekels. The plan was a result of evaluations made following the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, but the required funding was yet to be approved. It included improvement to the security capabilities of the 40 settlements as well as other safeguards. In addition, fortification of 19 settlements in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley was continuing. IDF had already been allocated NIS 39 million to reinforce settlements that would now be closer to Area A following the

implementation of the agreement. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 October)

31. On 27 October, it was reported that a new ultra-Orthodox town was under construction across the Green Line near the settlement of Alei Zahav in Samaria, about 10 km east of Rosh Ha'ayin. Chabad Illit, alternately known as Ali Zahav West, would comprise 200 housing units in its first stage. The plan for the area had been approved by Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush and included 700 housing units to be built over five years. Sale of the homes in the new neighbourhood had begun five months earlier, a short time after the cornerstone had been laid. At the time of the report, 24 units were already in an advanced stage of construction and another 176 were in the initial stages. The neighbourhood would include schools, synagogues and ritual baths. Housing Minister Yitzhak Levy toured the area of western Samaria and welcomed the initiative to build the ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 October)

32. On 27 October, it was reported that some NIS 10 million in funding to boost security in the settlements had been approved by the Knesset defence budget subcommittee. The largest investment approval, NIS 1 million, was to be spent on building a security wall for Kfar Darom in Gaza. The total amount approved for Gaza was NIS 2.165 million. Some NIS 500,000 was to be spent on an access road for Givat Harsina, near Kiryat Arba. (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 October)

33. On 28 October, it was reported that the IDF redeployment for the logistic implementation of Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, in the framework of the Wye River Memorandum, would be completed by 15 November. According to the agreement, six army camps would be evacuated. Thirteen permanent camps had been built to accommodate the redeployment. IDF was still working on the new camp in the Shaked Forest, after the High Court of Justice had rejected an appeal regarding the safe passage between the Erez junction and Turkuminya. The overall budget for evacuating old bases and building new ones was about NIS 300 million. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 28 October)

34. On 3 November, Prime Minister Barak set a deadline for the evacuation of four small outposts in the West Bank, telling the security cabinet that if it was not done voluntarily by the weekend, he would order IDF to do it by force. The four sites, inhabited by a handful of people, were among 12 outposts Barak had ordered evacuated 10 days earlier, as a part of a compromise with the settlers. Security officials stated that IDF had already been given orders to dismantle the encampments on 7 November if the settlers failed to do so. Education Minister Yossi Sarid called for stricter supervision of the dismantling of encampments: "I am not sure anyone has a clear picture of what is happening", he stated. Sarid was responding to reports that the settlers had dismantled two trailers and removed two families and a bachelor from Mitzpe Hagit, but new trailers were set up on a site near Hilltop 777, at Itamar and Mitzpe Kramim near Kochav Hashahar, two of the encampments scheduled for removal. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 November).

35. On 7 November, the High Court of Justice rejected a petition by a Palestinian human rights organization which had sought a ruling that would declare illegal a new outline plan for the expansion of the Ma'aleh Adumim settlement which included additional land which ought to have been allocated for the needs of the local Palestinian population. All three judges on the panel wrote brief opinions unanimously rejecting the petition, saying that the subject was strictly one of policy and fell under the exclusive purview of the Government, with the court unable to intervene. Ehab Abu Ghosh, head of the Jerusalem Legal Centre, which had submitted the petition, charged that the expansion of Ma'aleh Adumim violated international law and exceeded the criteria accepted by the High Court for expanding settlements in the West Bank, namely, the natural needs of those actually living in the settlements. According to the petition, the expansion of Ma'aleh Adumim and the designation of land use encompassed in the outline plan dovetailed with the unofficial Metropolitan Jerusalem Master Plan and Development Plan prepared by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. Instead of providing for the needs of the territories' indigenous population, the outline plan provided land-use solutions meant to satisfy the residential, commercial and tourism needs of the Jewish population of Jerusalem. The human rights organization B'Tselem called the High Court decision a judicial seal of approval for government policy that validated a serious violation of human rights of tens of thousands of Palestinians residing in the villages around the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim. "[The verdict validates] the annexation of occupied territories, the expropriation of land, discrimination, expulsion, the

restrictions on freedom of movement, and more." (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 8 November)

36. On 8 November, it was reported that, according to a document distributed by the Jewish Settler Council, the land of the West Bank outposts that had been evacuated "will, in practice, continue to be under the control of the settlements" and could be used for "agriculture and other activity, as the restriction applies solely to residence". The document, disseminated in the settlements in the wake of the "outpost agreement" between the Council and the Barak Government, listed eight categories laid down for the 42 outposts in the West Bank, as follows: category 1: 8 legal outpost; category 2: 7 legal outposts which would receive final authorization for building immediately after the licensing procedures were completed; category 3: 13 "frozen" outposts; category 4: four outposts that were supposed to have been evacuated but which remained intact; category 5: 3 unmanned outpost from which the facilities at the site would be removed; category 6: 2 empty sites where a Jewish presence had been planned but would now not be implemented; category 7: 3 outposts to be removed to nearby sites; category 8: 2 outposts to be evacuated by the time the planning procedures were concluded. (*Ha'aretz*, 8 November)

37. On 9 November, Peace Now protested against issuing of construction tenders for 14 housing units in West Bank settlements. The movement stated that, since the convening of the Ministerial Committee on Settlement Affairs, tenders for a total of 55 housing units in the West Bank and Gaza settlements had been issued. The movement charged that settlement construction was taking place outside the authorized settlement blocs to which the Government has referred in the preparation for final-status negotiations. (*Jerusalem Post*, 5 November)

38. On 10 November, IDF soldiers and security forces completed the evacuation of the Maon Farm south-east of Hebron. By the afternoon it was reported that the Civil Administration had dismantled the temporary housing, destroyed the permanent structures and transferred personal belongings, furniture and equipment to the settlement of Maon. The settlers, meanwhile, had vowed to return and rebuild the farm. The troops and the police had encountered mainly passive resistance from the settlers during the pre-dawn operation. Of hundreds evacuated, police had arrested 47 people; 20 were released after questioning and 27 were released under certain restrictions. According to reporters, one of the most difficult things for media and security forces during the evacuation was to witness the way parents had placed their young children and babies in the forefront of the action. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 11 November)

39. On 14 November, it was reported that five Palestinians had been injured after being beaten by dozens of settlers in a scuffle near the evacuated outpost of Havat Maon. The settlers, many of whom had been forcibly removed from the area, were at that time hiding out in caves in the area surrounding. IDF personnel had succeeded in removing many of the settlers, arresting eight in the process. Many more succeeded in hiding in the numerous natural caves found in the area, however. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 14 November)

40. On 16 November, Civil Administration officials and IDF forces dismantled several tents belonging to Palestinian residents from nearby Yatta village which had been erected near the Havat Maon Farm and allegedly inside an IDF firing zone. A civil Administration spokesperson said the tents were set up by the villagers every season while they worked the field, but all had houses in the village. Meanwhile seeking to assist the four families evicted from the Havat Maon Farm, the right-wing movement Women in Green organized a so-called "Zionist response" and established a bank account to send in donations for them. In a related development, Peace Now declared that since the elections, the Government had published building tenders for the construction of 2,703 housing units in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and that, since the appointment of the Special Ministerial Committee on Settlements, tenders had been issued for 109 housing units. The latest tender had been issued a few days before, for the building of 54 housing units in Ariel, the Movement stated. (*Jerusalem Post*, 17 November)

41. On 28 November, Peace Now called for the immediate expulsion of the Jewish families in Hebron, after it learned of the settlers' plans to construct a new neighbourhood on an army base situated in Hebron. Military sources denied that the army had allowed the settlers to live there permanently, despite claims by the settlers to the contrary. *Ha'aretz* learned that students from the nearby Yeshiva had been living at the base for a number of years. The total number of students had never exceeded 20 and the move had been permitted

only because the Yeshiva had been undergoing renovation. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 29 November)

42. On 29 November, in a letter protesting Israel's settlements policy and plans to expand Efrat, Palestinian chief negotiator Yasser Abed Rabbo warned that settlement expansion would endanger the peace process and create a crisis in the final-status talks. He accused Israel of planning to build 1,026 new homes in Efrat. Settler leaders claimed that the construction had been approved by the Rabin Government. They added that the new construction figure referred to by the Palestinians was totally inaccurate. (*Jerusalem Post*, 30 November)

43. On 1 December, it was reported that a group of 30 "Next Generation" activists had been forcibly removed by police and security forces from the hilltop of Nokdanim near Tekeo the previous day. It was the second time in a week that the group had attempted to establish an encampment at the site. In related news, it was reported that the Government was planning to dismantle an outpost not included in the original agreement between Prime Minister Barak and the Council of Settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. The outpost, Zeit Ra'anan, was some 400 metres north of another settlement called Talmon, and consisted of one caravan and was unmanned. The State had expressed its intention to dismantle the outpost in a response to a petition presented by the Peace Now movement to the High Court of Justice during Binyamin Netanyahu's term of office. In the original petition, Peace Now had demanded the removal of nine outposts. The State, however, had asked the Court to reject the Peace Now group's petition because of the October agreement signed between the settlers and Prime Minister Barak. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 1 December)

44. On 5 December, it was reported that the Housing Ministry had announced the issuance of tenders for the construction of some 500 homes in the settlements, specifically, for the construction of 177 housing units in Geva-Binyamin and 316 in alfei Menashe. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, Israeli government officials had tried to distance themselves from such building plans, saying that they were all projects approved under previous Governments. Peace Now stated that this latest round of tenders had raised the number of bids released under Barak's five-month tenure to 3,196, which already exceeded the yearly average of bids released by the Netanyahu Government. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 6 December)

45. On 7 December, the Palestinian Authority refused to continue negotiations on the final-status talks until Israel agreed to freeze all settlement activities. "We were not able to hold a meeting today to discuss the agreed agenda because of the issue of the settlements", chief Palestinian negotiator Yasser Abed Rabbo told reporters in Ramallah after meeting his Israeli counterpart Oded Eran. Diplomatic sources in Jerusalem stated that the crisis was an artificial one created by the Palestinians in advance of United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to the region. The Palestinian Authority and the Peace Now movement had criticized Barak for recent tenders to build 3,196 new houses in settlements since taking office in July, more than his predecessor Binyamin Netanyahu had issued in an average year. In related news, it was reported that Meretz (the main left-wing party in the current coalition) had threatened to "reassess its partnership" in the coalition if the Government continued its policies of settlement expansion and expropriations, deportation and home demolition against Palestinians. Housing Minister and National Religious Party leader Yitzhak Levy said that the construction in the settlements was being carried out according to government guidelines, in coordination with Barak. "Everything being built now is close to the Green Line", Levy's spokesperson stated. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 7 December)

46. On 27 December, it was reported that Deputy Defence Minister Ephraim Sneh had blasted a Peace Now report claiming that the Civil Administration had approved building plans for 2,757 housing units in the West Bank and Gaza settlements and that an additional 2,139 housing units had been submitted for approval since October 1999. Sneh told Israel Radio that the permits were worthless as they required his approval. "Plans submitted were not authorized, as we are in the midst of negotiations", he said, adding that none of the plans mentioned in the report had reached him. Peace Now claimed that the report had referred to approved building permits between 15 October and 13 December. The building permits related to plans in six different settlements. During the same period, 2,139 plans had been submitted for approval in 5 settlements, including Kfar Adumim and others. In addition, the movement claimed that approval had been given to set up 85 caravans in encampments dismantled by Prime

Minister Barak. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 28 December)

47. On 17 January, it was reported that Jerusalem city hall's chief engineer, had instructed the architectural firm that had won a tender for planning a Jewish housing complex in Abu Dis to speed up the planning. The move came as the Palestinian Authority sought to win an Israeli decision to turn the 90 per cent of the village in Area B, under joint Israeli-Palestinian control, into Area A as part of the upcoming withdrawal. The Palestinian Authority planned Abu Dis as its seat of government in a final status agreement that would give the Palestinians access to Jerusalem. The Palestinian Authority had constructed a still-unused parliament building. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 January)

48. On 16 February, it was reported that only a small percentage of West Bank land claimed for settlement purposes was currently being utilized, according to figures released by the Peace Now two days earlier. According to the Peace Now report, actually utilized settlement land on the West Bank amounted to 78,786 dunams. The lands included residential areas in the settlements, industrial and commercial zones, greenhouses and areas set aside for development purposes. The Peace Now estimate did not include unused land under settlement jurisdiction or under control by order of the IDF Central Command. The total settlement area was far larger than the lands currently under use. Peace Now had repeatedly requested State authorities to supply data about land areas under actual use by settlers, but those requests had gone unanswered. Its current estimation was based on satellite photographs it had taken in March 1999. At the end of the month, a proceeding in Jerusalem's District Court would examine Peace Now's claim that it had the right to be given such information under the Freedom of Information Law. Peace Now's report also ranked the settlements in terms of size, disclosing that Ma'aleh Adumim (3,405 dunams) was the largest, followed by Ariel (2,903 dunams), Giva't Ze'ev (1,935) and Efrat (1,509). According to the report, Ma'aleh Adumim had some 50,000 dunams under its jurisdiction, an area 16 times larger than its utilized land. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 February)

49. On 21 February 2000, it was reported that according to figures released by the Council for Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, the Jewish population in the settlements beyond the Green Line had grown in 1999 by 12.5 per cent, the highest growth rate recorded in recent years. In December 1999, the Jewish population in the settlements had numbered 193,680, according to the figures. The rate of growth was based on a comparison between the number of people in Jewish communities beyond the Green Line in December 1998, according to Central Bureau of Statistics figures, and the number in December 1999 according to the Council figures. About 66,500 people, about 30 per cent of the Jewish settlers, lived in the greater Jerusalem area, comprising Ma'aleh Adumim, Giva't Ze'ev, Betar Elite, Har Adar, Afrat and most of the Etzion block, areas that were expected to remain under Israeli rule after the final status agreement. The impressive rise in 1999 (12.5 per cent) was attributed to relatively extensive construction permitted by the Netanyahu Government in the last two years and the rapid occupation of apartments in the past year. The relevant figures are as follows:

Settlement	*Central Bureau of Statistics figures December 1998*	*Council of Jewish Communities figures December 1999*	*Growth per capita*	*Growth in percentage*
Oranit	4 490	4 800	310	6.9
Alfe-Minashi	4 360	4 900	640	12.4
Alkanah	2 920	3 300	380	13
Efrat	6 120	6 600	480	7.8
Ariel	14 400	16 100	1 700	11.8
Beit El	3 670	4 000	430	12
Beit Arieh	2 230	2 500	270	12.1
Beit Elite	11 300	13 500	2 200	19.4
Binyamin	23 200	25 050	1 850	8

Settlement	*Central Bureau of Statistics figures December 1998*	*Council of Jewish Communities figures December 1999*	*Growth per capita*	*Growth in percentage*
Bikat Yardin	2 900	3 400	500	17.2
Giva'at Ze'ev	9 720	10 500	780	8
Gosh Etzion	8 100	9 200	1 100	13.5
Har Adar	1 380	1 500	120	8.7
Har Hebron	3 800	4 500	700	18.4
Hebron	480	480	-	-
Kiryat Arba	5 710	5 900	190	3.3
Hof Gaza	6 100	6 600	500	8.2
Ma'aleh Adumim	22 200	25 200	3 000	13.5
Maleh Ephrai	1 430	1 700	270	18.9
Emanuel	3 290	3 900	610	18.5
Kdomim	2 400	3 000	600	25
Kiryat Sefer	10 500	13 000	2 500	23.8
Karn Shomron	5 370	6 000	630	11.7
Shomron	15 400	17 150	1 750	11.4
Migelot	800	900	100	12.5
Total	**172 170**	**193 680**	**21 510**	**12.5**

50. On 28 February 2000, IDF, the Israel Police and Civil Administration personnel evicted six Palestinian Beduin families who had returned to dwell in the firing zone near the Havat Maon Farm site. Security forces detained two Palestinians who had resisted attempts to oust them from the site. The IDF spokesperson said the Beduins, all residents of Yatta, had in recent days returned to their cave dwellings despite the fact that the area has been declared a closed military zone. They had been evicted from the site in November 1999, but the previous week Deputy Minister Ephraim Sneh had said they were permitted to work the land and graze livestock in the area but forbidden to dwell there permanently. During the previous month, Prime Minister Barak had asked Sneh to review the issue after receiving a request from Agriculture Minister Haim Oron to allow the families to return. (*Jerusalem Post*, 29 February)

Roads

51. On 21 November 1999, it was reported that, despite Palestinian protests, Israel was hoping to complete a four-lane road and terminal between Jerusalem and the entrance to Bethlehem by 22 December, with the aim of alleviating the severe traffic congestion prior to the influx of tourists expected for the millennium celebration. The Palestinians charged that the site would become another Erez checkpoint and had refused to cooperate with the Israeli officials. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 November)

Housing

52. On 27 August, it was reported that Shlomo Ben-Ami, Israeli Minister of Internal Security, was advocating the "large-scale legitimization of illegal dwellings, on the condition that they be integrated into development plans and, in certain cases, that the owners pay fines for violating the law". The minister's proposal was contained in a written reply, dated 12 August, to Adam Killer, spokesperson for Gush Shalom movement. Ben-Ami, who had established a joint committee with Justice Minister Yossi Beilin to seek solutions to the problem of illegal dwellings, wrote: "I am opposed with every ounce of my being to the destruction of houses, and I believe that the practice can be halted and a solution found". (*Ha'aretz*, 27 August)

53. On 2 September, the Supreme Court rejected the appeal of Elad, a Jewish housing organization, saying it had no rights to a building it had rented in 1991 from the Amidar housing company in the Silwan neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The rejection was based on the false claim that the building's Palestinian owners had moved to an Arab country. Part of the building, belonging to the children of Ahmed Abassi, who had died in 1980, had been taken over by members of Elad in the middle of the night in 1991 under police protection. Amidar had rented the apartment to Elad after the Supervisor of Absentee Property had accepted an affidavit saying that all of Abassi's 12 children had left Jerusalem and moved to Arab countries. The estate and some of the children had instituted an action in the Jerusalem District Court for a declaration that they enjoyed owners' rights over the property and that any transaction affecting it carried out by others was invalid. The court found that in fact five of the children were not absentees and ruled that the declaration of the Supervisor of Absentee Property and the sale of the rights were tainted by extreme lack of good faith. The Justices of the Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 September)

54. On 25 October, the home of three families, numbering 18 people, in the East Jerusalem village of Beit Hanina was demolished under an Interior Ministry directive. The action came despite an agreement between the Jerusalem municipality and the Beit Hanina administration, according to which no new illegal structures would be built and no existing building would be demolished. The municipality said the Jerusalem district of the Interior Ministry had halted cooperation over illegal construction in the eastern part of the city. Although Interior Security Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami was said to oppose such home demolitions, he authorized the above-mentioned destruction. The three families had moved into a tent near the site of their former home. The owner of the house said he had been warned by police that his home would be demolished but had obtained an order against it. Since Prime Minister Barak had taken office, four Palestinian homes had been razed. (*Ha'aretz*, 26 October)

55. On 23 November, it was reported that Israeli bulldozers, backed by a large number of soldiers and police officers, had entered Essawieh village in East Jerusalem and demolished two houses. Eighteen members of a family had been living in one of the demolished houses, while the other was still being rebuilt after being bulldozed by the authorities earlier in the month. An official of the Jerusalem municipality, which had ordered the demolitions, said that the buildings had been built without permits: "One house ... was built on land which will be used for public purposes and the other was under construction", she said. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 24 November)

56. On 30 December, it was reported that Amnesty International had published a very critical report describing the Israeli policy towards the citizens of the occupied territories, especially the regulations on demolition of houses and land confiscation. According to the report, the number of demolitions per year had not fallen since the 1993 Declaration of Principles. To the contrary, although the number of Palestinians under direct Israeli control was currently only one eighth what it had been previously, the average number of house demolitions per year (226) had even shown a slight increase. According to the Amnesty report, since 1987 the Israeli authorities had demolished at least 2,650 Palestinian homes in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, because they did not have a "building permit". However, Palestinians were denied the opportunity to build legally owing to the Israeli policy of land confiscation from private Palestinian ownership, which was then used exclusively for Israeli development. The report also underlined the emotional consequences for the individuals and families whose homes had been demolished. There was no advance warning of the time and the date of a demolition; the bulldozers arrived accompanied by scores of soldiers armed with batons and guns. The family might only have 15 minutes to remove what belongings they had before the furniture was thrown into the street and their home was bulldozed. (*Ha'aretz*, 30 December)

57. On 2 February 2000, Jerusalem municipality bulldozers demolished an Isawiyah house for having been built illegally. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, the action fuelled resistance among neighbourhood residents. The demolition had been carried out shortly before Israeli and Palestinian negotiators had met in Jerusalem for final-status talks on Jerusalem and other issues. A neighbour who had witnessed the demolition from her porch said that two bulldozers accompanied by a large number of border police had turned the house into a mass of twisted metal and concrete. The house had belonged to Abdel Razak Sheikh Omar, who had rebuilt the house after it had been demolished

earlier. According to Darwish, chairman of the Isawiyah Development Committee, 20 per cent of the houses in Isawiyah did not have permits. A Jerusalem municipality official said that "this was a house without people, it belonged to a man whose house was demolished two years ago. He rebuilt it again without permission." However, Sheikh Omar said that he, his wife and six children had been living in the house up until the demolition. Asked whether Prime Minister Barak supported demolitions, his office said: "The Prime Minister supports the enforcement of the law in all places". Sheik Omar said he could no longer afford to rent a house in Jerusalem, and if he left Jerusalem for a West Bank town, his family would lose its residency rights. "My wife will lose her health fund coverage and she will not be able to continue her dialysis", he said. Darwish said that the borders in the existing municipal plan of Isawiyah needed to be expanded to take into account rapid population growth in recent years. A new plan also needed to allow for building in areas currently zoned for public use, a process that would make the house in Sheikh Omar's area legal, he said. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 February)

58. On 25 February, it was reported that senior politicians had instructed the Jerusalem Municipality not to demolish Palestinian houses in the east side of the city prior to Pope John Paul's visit to Israel on 21 March 2000. The freeze was planned to take effect on 1 March 2000. However, a Jerusalem municipal spokesperson told *Ha'aretz* that the city did not recognize any agreement to halt demolitions of illegal houses for the papal visit, or for any other occasion. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 February).

Water

59. On 7 November, it was reported that the National Security Council, in a set of recommendations to Prime Minister Barak, had stated that Israel should refrain from making a permanent division of water resource with the Palestinians in the final settlement and should agree to joint management of West Bank's water sources only after a lengthy period. During the proposed interim period, Israel would continue to control the major groundwater reservoir in the area, on the western slopes of the Samaria hills, and the Palestinians would have to demonstrate their ability to manage the water sources. At the same time, the National Security Council recommended that an intensive effort should be made to develop new sources. There was a huge gap in water usage on the two sides of the Green Line. The Palestinians used a per capita average of 35 cubic metres of water a year, whereas consumption in Israel stood at 104 cubic metres. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 November)

60. On 11 November, Suha Arafat, the wife of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, stated during a speech welcoming the United States first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton that Israel was polluting the environment and thereby causing a host of health problems among the Palestinians. "It is important to point out the severe damage caused by intensive daily use of the poison gas by Israeli forces in the past years that has led to increased cancer cases among Palestinian women and children", she stated. She also said that 80 per cent of Palestinian water was contaminated and blamed Israel, saying it "has caused widespread diseases". Palestinian Authority Health Minister Raid Zaanoun said in a speech shortly afterwards that toxic gas pollution on the part of the Israelis had caused numerous miscarriages among Palestinian women. Prime Minister Barak's office responded angrily to Mrs. Arafat's remarks, issuing a statement "strongly condemning the unworthy statements made today by Palestinian personalities". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 November)

2. Restrictions affecting movement of Palestinians within, between, and their exit from and re-entry into the occupied territories

Identity cards, travel permits

61. On 23 August 1999, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators reached an agreement in principle on two thorny issues: the opening of the "safe passage route between the Gaza Strip and a point south of Hebron in the West Bank, and the start of construction at the Gaza port". While negotiators said that details remained to be worked out, the agreement in principle showed that differences over Wye River Memorandum implementation were being narrowed. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 24 August)

62. On 25 August, it was reported that, according to the Israeli liaison officer on legal help to the Palestinian Authority, Jean-Claude Nidam, some 1,500 Palestinians had been barred from entering Israel because they had not paid their debts to Israeli businessmen. (*Jerusalem Post*, 25 August)

63. On 26 August, it was reported that Israel had recently thwarted a Palestinian attempt to allow a foreign vessel to visit Gaza, even though the Palestinian Authority did not have a maritime agreement with Israel. The Palestinian Authority had arranged with the International Sea Scouts for a ship to visit several ports in the region as part of a peace voyage. The original agenda called for stopovers in Egypt, Gaza, Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The voyage was to include Sea Scouts from several countries, including both Arabs and Israelis. The boat had arrived several days earlier and the Palestinians had requested permission for it to sail from Ashdod to Gaza. The Foreign Ministry had objected, claiming that the voyage was not part of the interim agreements. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 August)

64. On 13 September, the Interior Ministry informed the lawyer representing Musa Budeiri, a member of one of Jerusalem's most prominent families, that the Ministry had withdrawn an order banning Budeiri from living in the city. The Ministry had ordered Budeiri, an al-Quds University professor, to leave Jerusalem by 22 August because he had a United Kingdom passport, according to the Ministry, the centre of his life was not in Jerusalem. (*Jerusalem Post*, 14 September)

65. On 14 September, officials close to the safe passage negotiations reported good progress and were confident that the southern route would be opened as scheduled in early October 1999. According to the arrangement being worked out, even Palestinians barred from Israel would be allowed to travel the route under border police escort. The Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum called for the southern route to be opened by 1 October, but that was a Friday and it was agreed by both sides to delay until Sunday. The northern passage route was to be opened two days later. The opening of the safe passage was significant for the Palestinians because it was a tangible link between its two great blocks of territories. For years, any Palestinian who had wanted to travel between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip needed to get permission from Israel. According to the arrangements currently being worked out, even those who did not have security clearance would be able to use the route, which entailed entering Israel and travelling on its highways. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 September)

66. On 3 October, it was reported that the scheduled opening of a safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had been postponed, after Israeli and Palestinian negotiators had failed to resolve differences over who would issue magnetic security passes and Israel's right to arrest suspects on the route. The route, as agreed in the previous month's Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, was to run from Tarkumiya, near Hebron, to the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians argued that the route was supposed to guarantee safe passage without anyone using it running the risk of arrest; otherwise it would be "a trap" rather than a safe passage. In theory, all Palestinians would be entitled to use the safe passage. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 October)

67. On 4 October, it was reported that Israeli and Palestinian negotiators had agreed on terms for the first-ever safe passage route between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, saying that all that was needed was the approval of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, who was to review the pact overnight. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 October)

68. On 4 October, Prime Minister Barak's office issued a statement saying that the Prime Minister had decided, in response to a request from Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, to "allow Palestinian Authority Police Chief Ghazi Jabali to attend the funeral of his late father in Ramallah" the day before. Up until two years before, Jabali had had a VIP pass, enabling him to cross into Israel without security checks. However, the Netanyahu Government had revoked the pass and issued an arrest warrant against him for his alleged involvement in planning an attack against a settlement near Nablus. The Palestinian Authority had refused to hand him over to Israel and he had lived and operated freely in Gaza. (*Jerusalem Post*, 5 October)

69. On 9 October, settlers heckled members of a Jordanian delegation who had come to pray at Machpela Cave and banged their fists on the car of the Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament, Abdel Hadi Majali. "I am very angry", Majali said afterwards. "Our trust in the peace process has been shaken by this incident." According to police, the Speaker had asked to enter the cave without prior coordination with security forces. According to witnesses, about 15 settlers had heckled the Jordanians, chanting in Arabic, "Abu Jihad is dead". The 20 Jordanian legislators were concluding a four-day visit to the West Bank and Hebron was their last stop. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 October)

70. On 17 October, Natan Sheransky stated that Israel had ended its policy of stripping Palestinians of their right to live in Jerusalem if they left the city for more than seven years. "It was an impractical policy that served no purpose. I am happy that we are stopping it today", Sheransky said of a practice that human rights groups had called "quiet deportation" of Palestinians from East Jerusalem. In a similar move, the Interior Ministry also changed the regulations regarding Jerusalem's Palestinians wishing to obtain Israeli citizenship. Until now, they had to give up their Jordanian citizenship, but this was virtually impossible under Jordanian law. Henceforth, they would only have to show that they had made serious efforts to rescind their Jordanian citizenship. B'Tselem had said that Israel had revoked the Jerusalem residency rights of 5,385 Palestinians since 1967, including 2,200 during the past three years. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, after the six-day war, the Government of Israel had offered Israeli citizenship to the Palestinians of East Jerusalem. The overwhelming majority, who had refused the offer, had become permanent residents of Israel in accordance with the Entry Law. In 1985, the Interior Ministry had promulgated regulations setting down the conditions whereby a residency permit was considered to have expired automatically. According to the regulations, the permit expired if its possessor "abandons Israel and settles outside Israel". This was defined as living outside of Israel for seven years or accepting permanent residency status or citizenship from another country. For the next 10 years, the Government had followed a consistent policy. East Jerusalem residents who did not return to the city for seven years in a row lost their residency rights. Those who came and went from time to time deposited their identity cards with the authorities when they left the country and received an exit card permitting them to return. When they returned, they were given their identity cards back for the duration of their visit. In 1995, the policy had suddenly changed, without warning and without a clearly stated declaration. Visits to Israel no longer rewound the seven-year clock. This applied even to East Jerusalem Palestinians who had moved to the West Bank and continued to enter Jerusalem on a regular basis. Many Palestinians who had lost their residency rights petitioned the High Court of Justice. The most important of those petitions, submitted by Moked, was currently being heard by a panel of five judges headed by Court President Aharon Barak. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 October)

71. On 22 October, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak had supported the erection of a fence between Israel and the Palestinian entity. Barak, speaking at the first discussions on the plan to separate security systems for Israel and the Palestinians under the final settlement, said that he supported a divider between Israel and the Palestinian entity, but that it should be an opening for cooperation, not a wall of hostility. He deferred discussion of the question of an external border between the Palestinian area and the outside world. Those points were currently under Israeli supervision. "The intention isn't to create a bubbling pressure cooker but good-neighbourly relations. But we haven't taken a stand on diplomatic status", Barak said, adding it was too soon to discuss the issue: "there isn't even an agreed-on border yet". According to the plan a security fence will be built along the border, described in the final settlement agreement, like the one standing along the Gaza border. Also according to the plan, Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be linked by 15 to 18 passages. Some will be designated for exclusive Palestinian or Israeli use. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 22 October)

72. On 25 October, the first safe passage for Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank was opened with a brief ceremony before the first 450 persons to use the passage crossed the Erez junction and made their way to Tarqumiya, south of Hebron. The opening came a month after the target date outlined in the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum and six years after the idea was first mentioned in the Oslo agreement. Most Gazans had not been allowed to leave the coastal strip since the 1993 Oslo accords, so IDF was expecting growing demands for travel on what was still a narrow road. Some 120,000 Gazans already had permits for the journey, which was supposed to take up to two hours. If it took longer, Israeli security would question the traveller. In all, some 132,000 Palestinians were eligible to use the route: 130,000 workers and business persons who had had permission to enter Israel in the past, and 2,000 more who had recently been granted safe-passage permits. In the past, those with permits could go only to Israel, but not to other Palestinian territories. Palestinians would have to renew their safe-passage permits every three months. However, those who were considered a security risk and travelled the passage in special buses must renew them every two weeks. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 24, 26 October)

73. On 29 October, Prime Minister Barak suspended the permission given just the week before to Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) leader Nayef Hawatmeh to enter the Palestinian-controlled areas. The Prime Minister's decision followed an interview of Hawatmeh by al-Jazera television of Qatar, in which he had voiced support for the armed struggle, saying "struggle is legitimate as long as settlers remain on Arab land". He had also imposed a condition for his return, saying that he insisted that he be allowed to move freely throughout the West Bank and Gaza and from the Palestinian areas abroad, and that his aides should be allowed to travel with him. Speaking to *Reuters* after he heard of the suspension, Hawatmeh said that all factions of the PLO had agreed years ago to focus action against Israel by political and diplomatic means rather than through armed struggle. He added that "the Barak decision suspending our right to return home is a hostile move against the peace process. It contravenes international law and human rights". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 29 October)

74. On 31 October, Shuhada Street in Hebron was opened fully to Palestinian taxis despite a demand from settlers not to open it following a shooting incident the day before. The final 300-metre stretch of the street was opened as a group of some 200 settlers held a prayer vigil protesting the decision. The IDF spokesperson stated that the road could now be used by Palestinian emergency and municipality vehicles as well as taxis and other registered cars. The road had been closed to Palestinian traffic since 25 March 1994. IDF officers told the *Jerusalem Post* that they saw no reason to stall the opening, but added that the market next to the Avraham Avinu quarter would remain closed until the Palestinians responded to Israeli demands to impose certain restrictions on activity there. (*Jerusalem Post*, 1 November)

75. On 4 November, Palestinian Civil Aviation and Airport Director-General Fayez Zaidan told the *Jerusalem Post* that Gaza International Airport was to start operating 24 hours a day later in November. An average of only two flights a day would land at and take off from the airport, but Ziadan expected the number of flights to increase with the approach of the year 2000. (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 November)

76. On 7 November, it was reported that Israel had rejected 40 per cent of the requests by Palestinians to use the safe passage route between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Since the opening of the route 11 days earlier, some 10,000 applications had been submitted, but the Israeli security authorities had issued the necessary magnetic cards only for about 6,000 Palestinians. According to a senior security official, the rejection rate is attributable to the fact that a large proportion of the applicants were residents of Gaza on the list of those barred from entering Israel. Every day about 500 Palestinians from Gaza were using the safe passage route, the majority travelling in buses and cabs. The magnetic cards for Palestinians who were prohibited from entry into Israel were pink. At first the idea was to issue red cards, but "in order to convey optimism" it was decided to use a rosy pink colour, according to the sources. The regular cards were green. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 November)

77. On 16 February, it was reported that an Israeli decision to close the Erez crossing to Palestinian trucks had touched off an angry reaction from the Palestinian Authority. For Israel, the decision to turn the Karni crossing into the only truck passage to and from the Gaza Strip was viewed as an efficiency measure. According to Palestinian Authority officials, the closure was due to take place on 1 March. Maher Kurd, an economic adviser to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, termed the planned closure of Erez "a severe blow that will leave thousands of truck owners bankrupted and cause huge losses on imports. This is a war. It certainly is not a peace-like gesture". Truck drivers voiced worries about the change. Under current arrangements, they were able to drive the entire route from Gaza to Ashdod. "This will effect all of trucks. We won't be able to drive in Israel and will lose our livelihood", said one trucker. An average of 130 Palestinian trucks crossed at Erez daily, according to an Israeli official. Israel did not assess fees at Erez, but truck owners must pay at Karni, which was split 60-40 between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. (*Jerusalem Post*, 16 February)

78. On 25 February, it was reported that the Palestinian Authority's Information Ministry would stop issuing press cards to Israeli journalists in response to a complaint by Palestinian journalists about Israeli restrictions on their freedom of movement. Yasser Abed Rabbo, who heads both the Culture and Information Ministries, also promised to try to have the Israeli restrictions lifted, although he warned that it was useless to respond "to chains with other chains". Two days earlier, some 20 journalists from Ramallah

(out of 240 Palestinian journalists operating in Gaza and the West Bank) had held a protest outside the Information Ministry. Under Israeli closure policy Palestinian journalists must get entry permits for Israel and transit passes for travel between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as Israeli permission to travel abroad. To cover official events in Israel, they were obliged first to obtain press badges from the Israeli government press office. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 February)

Closures

79. On 8 September, a closure was imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip at midnight, amid fears that Islamic terrorists would try to stage a large-scale bombing during the heavy pre-holiday shopping period. According to Israeli security sources, the closure had been based on "hot concrete information". Under the closure all Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip were barred from entering the county. Israel had traditionally imposed closures over major holidays, but this time the closure had been imposed earlier, on a workday, because of information that the terrorists were planning to stage an attack. Also, 9 September was the day Hamas marked the second anniversary of the killing of the Awadallah brothers near Hebron. The closure was expected to last over the weekend. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 September)

80. On 12 September, IDF lifted a closure imposed for the holiday weekend on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (*Jerusalem Post*, 13 September)

81. On 8 November, IDF soldiers closed the entrance and exit to the Kalandya refugee camp outside Ramalla Ha'aretz, after a request to camp leaders to quell clashes between residents and security forces was ignored. The IDF spokesperson said that in recent days there had been an increase in violent confrontations with the Israeli security forces, including the throwing of stones, bottles and other items. The spokesperson stated that the exit and the entrance would remain closed until further notice. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 November)

82. On 10 February, IDF forces imposed a closure on the village of Burkin, located in Area B (under Israeli security control) and General Security Service/Shin Bet (GSS) agents arrested several villagers. The closure was imposed following an incident in which one man was killed and another was seriously wounded when a bomb they were preparing exploded prematurely, according to Israeli officials. However, an Israeli security officer stated that the Palestinian Authority had started to investigate the incident, but it was too early to tell which organization the two belonged to or what they were planning. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 11 February)

C. Manner of implementation of restrictions

1. Checkpoints

83. On 28 January 2000, it was reported that a decision to move an IDF checkpoint situated near the Green Line had stirred fears of annexation. The relocation 3 kilometres eastward, which could be interpreted as the effective annexation of Mevo Horon and the adjacent Canada Park to Israel, were deemed liable to spark a new dispute between Israelis and Palestinians, sources close to the Israeli final status negotiation team admitted. Without consulting the Palestinian Authority, two weeks previously, IDF had moved the checkpoint. The crossing point had formerly been located about a mile north of the Latrun exchange. The relocated checkpoint was now in an area about which Israel and the Palestinian Authority have quarrelled for some time. Until the 1967 war, the area had been a no man's land stretching between Israeli and Jordanian positions. The Palestinians demanded that under a final status accord the borders of their state should cross the western perimeters of the Green Line (where Israel had positions before 1967), in which case the border would pass through the Latrun exchange. Moshe Brava, a geographer, had said that both old and new checkpoints were actually located very close to the eastern edge of the Green Line in the Latrun area, on the eastern ridge of the pre-1967 no man's land. He added that Israel had created facts in no man's land areas years ago, starting with the Six-Day War. When the fighting had stopped, IDF had destroyed three Palestinian villages in the area of Canada Park, expelling their residents from the area. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 January)

84. On 9 February, Fatima Abu Rmeila, 62, was laid to rest after suffering a heart attack while witnessing a raid on her house by Israeli soldiers. It was reported that on 7 February 2000, at 9.30 p.m., a large number of Israeli forces and intelligence agents had raided Abu Rmeila's house, which was located in the Israeli-controlled Zone H1 in Hebron. Fatima's husband, Fares

Abu Rmeila, 66, stated that approximately 10 soldiers and agents raided his house. Owing to a power cut, the raid had been carried out in total darkness, with only the light of high-density flashlights carried by the agents. The agents had brutally ransacked the home while shouting at the family members and holding several of them, including women and children, at gunpoint. Fatima, who was terrified, had collapsed. Fares stated that he had asked the commander to allow him to transfer her to the hospital but the commander had refused. Only 20 minutes later, after a series of negotiations, another intelligence agent had permitted him to take his wife to the hospital. However, despite Fatima's expressions of pain and the obvious need for urgent medical care, the car had been delayed for another 15 minutes at an Israeli checkpoint, near the house. By the time the car had arrived at the hospital, it was too late, as Fatima was already dead. (*Ha'aretz*, 10 February; *Jerusalem Post*, 11 February)

2. Interrogation procedures

85. On 22 August 1999, it was reported that the Public Committee against Torture had submitted a petition to the High Court on behalf of Hasin Sheikh, charging that GSS had stopped torturing him after the Committee had petitioned the High Court about their interrogation methods, and then resumed after the Committee had withdrawn the petition. In response to the petition, the State Attorney's Office and GSS had denied using the methods alleged by Sheikh at any time since his detention on 4 July 1999. In the petition, it was claimed that GSS interrogators had allowed Sheikh to sleep for only three hours between 12 August and 14 August, had pulled his beard, screamed repeatedly into his ear, prevented him from changing his clothing and underwear and threatened him and his family. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 August)

86. On 6 September, in a unanimous ruling by nine justices, the High Court of Justice outlawed many of the most common methods of interrogation of GSS. With the ruling, the court overturned the guidelines laid down by a 1987 commission of inquiry headed by then Supreme Court President Moshe Landau, which had authorized GSS to use "moderate physical pressure" if it was necessary to save human life. The methods that the court banned include shaking, the *Ashabach* (in which an interrogee is forced to sit on a low chair that tilts forward for hours at a time, with his hands tied behind his back, his head covered by a tightly sealed sack and with loud music blasting in his ears), the "frog crouch", in which the interrogee is forced to crouch on the tips of his fingers and toes for up to five minutes at a time, and sleep deprivation. The judges refrained from defining these methods as "torture", but ruled that they were illegal infringements of interrogees' basic rights. The ruling had been written by Supreme Court President Aharon Barak, with eight justices concurring. It had been issued in response to seven petitions by the Public Committee against Torture in Israel, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Centre for the Defence of the Individual and attorney Andre Rosenthal, all filed in the names of Palestinian interrogees. The justices stressed that the ruling had been a difficult one to make, since they were aware of the reality of terrorism and were therefore worried that the decision might interfere with the State's ability to combat it. But being judges, they wrote, they were obligated to rule according to the law; and under the existing legal situation, neither the Government nor GSS had the power to authorize an interrogator to use any means that did not accord with "a fair and reasonable interrogation". Such an interrogation, they continued, could not include any "cruel, inhumane or humiliating" measures. If the Government wished to permit GSS to utilize such methods, the justices added, the Knesset would have to enact the relevant legislation. However, any such legislation would have to accord with the Basic Law on Human Dignity and Liberty, which stated that any infringement on human liberty was permitted only with legislation "befitting the values of the State of Israel, enacted for an appropriate purpose, and to an extent no greater than required". The court rejected the State's argument that the defence of necessity, which exempted a person from criminal liability if a crime was necessary to save a life, justified the use by GSS of "physical pressure to extract information from interrogees". The justices said that defence was essentially an "ad hoc" one, which exempted a person from liability for a specific action committed to counter an immediate threat. It therefore could not serve as a source of authority for a routine method of interrogation. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 7 September)

87. On 14 September, it was reported that two GSS employees claimed that they had been made to take the blame for the death during interrogation of a Palestinian man when in fact more senior GSS staff had been responsible. The two petitioned the State to be allowed to review all materials about their case held

by GSS and the Attorney General's office. The two were involved, among others, in the interrogation of a Palestinian internee, Khaled Sheikh, who had died on 19 December 1989 as a result of torture. In their petition, they claimed "the interrogation, like other interrogations at the facility at that time, was conducted at a level of violence exceeding GSS standards". In addition to the petitioners, three other interrogators took part in the violent stage, including one with administrative ranks and two experienced senior interrogators. (*Ha'aretz*, 14 September)

88. On 15 September, it was reported that the Ministerial Committee on General Security Service Interrogations was due to meet to consider how the Government should respond to the High Court decision banning interrogation involving physical or mental pressure. The day before, Justice Minister Yossi Beilin had told the Knesset that legislation seeking to bypass the ruling would be unconstitutional, would conflict with the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom, and would not withstand a High Court challenge. The Justice Ministry refused to respond to a newspaper report that Deputy Attorney General Yehudit Karp had prepared an opinion for Prime Minister Barak opposing passage of such a law. Unlike the Justice Minister, Barak and Attorney General Elyakin Rubinstein had publicly expressed support for the legislation, and GSS leaders had reportedly insisted upon it. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 September)

89. On 16 September, it was reported that the Ministerial Committee formed following the High Court decision to ban torture had appointed a panel of experts to find a legal solution to the interrogation of suspected terrorists in cases of clear and present danger. Prime Minister Barak had made it clear that he did not object to a proposal for new legislation permitting the use of special methods of interrogation in circumstances of immediate danger (the so-called "ticking-bomb" scenario, referring to a suspect of an impending terrorist attack). It was emphasized to the participants in the meeting that the High Court ruling stipulated that the Knesset could decide to enact legislation legalizing the use of more severe techniques by interrogators. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 September)

90. On 24 October, it was reported that, despite the objections of Justice Minister Yossi Beilin, 47 Knesset members, mostly from the opposition but including some from the right wing of the coalition, were backing a bill that would allow GSS to use "special investigative tactics" on suspects who had information "that if revealed would immediately prevent a real and immediate danger to the security of the State". The bill, proposed by Likud Knesset member Reuvin Rivlin, and to be tabled the following day, sought to circumvent High Court ruling outlawing any physical pressure on suspects under interrogation by GSS. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 October)

91. On 3 November, it was reported that two former GSS interrogators sentenced to jail for the death of a Palestinian detainee had sued their former commander, Ya'acov Perry, for NIS 2.2 million for allegedly manipulating them into taking full blame for the incident and thereby exonerating five other agents. The two, identified only by their initials as Aleph (A) and Shin (S), also charged that the regular interrogation methods at the Gaza facility to which they had been assigned were "violent, illegal and not allowed [even] by GSS regulations". Although the incident had taken place 10 years previously, the two agents had not made the matter public until last June, when Perry had published an autobiography of his years of service in GSS. "I can say severe violence ... was used against him. But that is the method. It was not a misstep taken by just a few people. It was a method we were taught", "S" told Army Radio. "In an organization like GSS, in which discipline is a sacred principle, even a hint or a wink were taken as orders". (*Ha'aretz*, 3 November; *Jerusalem Post*, 3, 4 November)

92. On 4 November, it was reported that Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein had published guidelines for General Security Service interrogators explaining the implication of the High Court of Justice ruling of 6 September banning the blanket use of "moderate physical pressure" during interrogation and enumerating the conditions that must be met before such methods could be legally justified. The Court had ruled that GSS could not be given prior approval for the use of interrogation techniques including violent shaking and other methods of "moderate physical pressure" that human rights organizations had branded as torture. However, it had added that paragraph 34 (K) of the Panel Law, otherwise known as the "necessity defence", could serve as justification for such normally illegal methods, if the interrogator proved they were essential to extract information from the suspect to prevent an imminent and concrete threat to human life. In his guidelines, Rubinstein had made it clear that he would not give any GSS interrogator prior approval to

use the banned methods. Rubinstein wrote: "In situations where the interrogator has taken measures required immediately to obtain vital information in order to prevent tangible danger of grave injury to national security, or the life, freedom, or physical well-being of individuals, and there is no other reasonable way in the circumstances to obtain the information, and to resort to these interrogation methods was reasonable under the circumstances to prevent the injury, the Attorney General will consider not opening criminal procedures." Rubinstein explained that in order for a danger to be considered immediate, it does not have to take place within the next few hours. Quoting from the High Court decision, he wrote that the danger could occur in a few days or even a few weeks, on condition that "it is certain the danger will come to fruition and that there is no other way to prevent it." (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 5 November)

93. On 8 November, the Justice Ministry distributed a summary of draft legislation that would amend the criminal code by banning the use of torture and punishing the violators with prison sentences of 10 to 20 years. The draft is intended to implement the recommendations of a committee which concluded in July 1995 that an article should be added to Israel's criminal law to explicitly ban torture. An additional article in the draft legislation deals with "failure to prevent crimes" and aims to punish those who remain silent in the face of torture. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 November)

94. On 20 December, it was reported that a source close to Justice Minister Yossi Beilin had stated that there was a consensus in the Justice Ministry for holding off legislation to legitimize the use of physical pressure in GSS interrogations. Instead, participants at a high-level Ministry meeting suggested allocating additional tools and funding to develop new interrogation techniques not involving physical force. According to the proposal, the Government would review the situation in a year or two. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 20 December)

95. On 20 January 2000, according to Law Society, a Palestinian human rights group, for the first time since the High Court of Justice had banned the use of force against Palestinian detainees, a Palestinian had died in Israeli custody after being tortured. Lafi al-Rajabi, 20, had died a few days earlier while in Israeli detention near Ariel. His body, handed over to his family, bore wounds, cuts and bruises. No autopsy report was given to the family. Amir Abramovitch, media adviser to Justice Minister Yossi Beilin, said Beilin was unaware of the case, but he had asked his Ministry's Human Rights Department to investigate. Al-Rajabi had been arrested seven months earlier in Ramle while attending the trial of a relative and had then been accused of ties to criminal defendants and not carrying an ID card. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 January)

96. On 31 January, it was reported that Jerusalem Magistrate's Court Judge Ezra Kama was to decide in the following few days whether to hear a suit by two former GSS agents against former GSS head Ya'acov Perry for defamation of character and damages (see para. 91 above). In the two agents' suit for NIS 2.2 million they claimed that Perry manipulated them into taking full blame for the death of a Palestinian detainee in Gaza interrogation centre in 1989 and thereby exonerating five other interrogators with seniority. The two agents had spent four months in prison. According to the two agents, the routine interrogation techniques used by everyone in the Gaza facility were illegal and exceeded standard GSS regulations. (*Jerusalem Post*, 31 January)

97. On 2 February, Jerusalem District Court rejected a request by the former head of GSS to disallow a lawsuit by two former agents accusing him of libel and seeking NIS 2.2 million in damages. The two agents claimed that they had taken the blame for the death of a Palestinian suspect they interrogated together with five other agents, even though three other agents were in the room during the final interrogation leading to his death. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 February)

98. On 10 February, it was reported that a State Comptroller's report on GSS during the Palestinian uprising (intifada) had been made public. The report, written in 1995 but kept secret for five years, revealed that GSS interrogators had continued to use excessive force during interrogations, to lie about their methods and to write incomplete reports over the next five years, during which time the State Comptroller was investigating their activities. According to the conclusions of the 1994 State Comptroller's report, "those who held overall responsibility for GSS failed badly in their responsibility to keep its activities within the framework of the law". The investigation, conducted between 1988 and 1992 under former State Comptroller Miriam Ben Porat, had been completed in 1994 but had been withheld from publication until a Knesset Defence and Foreign Relations subcommittee had agreed to release a nine-page condensed version,

which did not give specific examples of the violations. The 1988-1992 investigation had focused on the Gaza interrogation facility. The State Comptroller found that the GSS had not obeyed the law, the Landau report guidelines or the internal guidelines formulated by the service itself. Ben Porat had said that the use of physical pressure against detainees had continued after the publication of the Landau report and had exceeded the constraints that the Commission had imposed. The heads of GSS were aware of this, she added. "Violation of the Landau Commission and the GSS regulations continued to be widespread in the interrogation facility in Gaza and, to some extent, in other facilities. These violations were not the result of ignorance of the law but were done deliberately", she wrote. "Veteran and senior investigators in the Gaza facility carried out severe and systematic violations. Senior GSS commanders did not prevent these violations. They added resources and methods of applying pressure to the GSS guidelines that were not included in the Landau Commission report, eliminated the constraints that the Landau Commission had applied to methods it did approve and failed to uproot these unauthorized methods, as their position obliged them to do", she wrote in her report. Ya'acov Perry, who headed the GSS during the intifada, said the State Comptroller's report was incorrect and was a cause of sorrow in the agency and among its members. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 10 February)

99. On 10 February, Justice Minister Yossi Beilin stated that Israel would never again revert to the GSS methods investigated by the State Comptroller from 1988 to 1992 or those which the High Court of Justice had declared illegal the previous year. Beilin was speaking to Ministry employees during a study day devoted to human rights issues. (*Jerusalem Post*, 11 February).

3. Administrative detention and conditions of detention

100. On 20 January, it was reported that IDF had arrested Hussein Abu Zneid and placed him in administrative detention until 18 April. According to the detention order, Abu Zneid, who comes from the village of Dura in the Hebron hills, was a Hamas activist. He had been due to be brought before a judge on 24 January. According to human rights lawyer Tamar Peleg, there were currently 13 Palestinians being held in administrative detention. In related news, it was reported that Moked — Defence of Individual and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel had petitioned against an order extending the administrative detention of Ayman Daraghma, who had been jailed without charges on 12 September 1995 and held behind bars ever since. Daraghma, who comes from Tubas, was the second-longest-held administrative detainee. According to the petitioner, two judges who had heard the appeals against his current detention order, which was due to expire on 26 January, said that the order should not be renewed again unless the authorities had "up-to-date and very serious" reasons for extending it. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 January; *Jerusalem Post*, 21 January)

101. On 2 February, it was reported that three attorneys, among them a representative of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and a former military prosecutor, claimed that the head of the army's Central Command, Brigadier Moshe Ya'alon, exceeded his authority recently when he issued a ninth administrative detention order against the longest-held administrative detainee in Israel. Ayman Daraghma, a 25-year-old resident of the West Bank village of Kafr Tubas, had the dubious distinction of having been held without trial since July 1995, longer than anyone currently in custody. A discussion of the latest order against him, which had been issued on 11 January 2000 and went into effect on 26 January, had been held before a military judge. The three attorneys defending Daraghma had based the demand for his release on a petition submitted to the High Court of Justice some 18 months earlier, in the case of another detainee. In that case, the Court had annulled the administrative detention order against Abed al-Fattah al-Amla, which had been issued by a military commander despite a military judge's decision to shorten his detention. GSS viewed Daraghma as an Islamic Jihad activist. He had once been convicted on charges of being Fatah activist but had been given early release in 1994 as part of the Oslo Accords. The military court's decision was expected to be handed down within a few days. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 February)

102. On 7 February, a military judge cancelled an administrative detention order issued by the head of the army's Central Command, Moshe Ya'alem, against Ayman Daraghma, who had been jailed without a trial since July 1995. Daraghma's lawyer argued that two judges who had heard the appeal against Daraghma's previous detention order, which had expired on 26 January 2000, said the order should not be renewed

unless the authorities had "up-to-date and very serious reasons" for extending it. The judge found that Ya'alon had not presented any such reason and had therefore ordered Daraghma's release. He gave the army prosecution 72 hours to appeal the decision. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 8 February)

103. On 9 February, Israeli authorities released Ayman Daraghma. Daraghma was informed of his release in writing. Attached to the release order was a map outlining the areas in which he would be allowed to travel. The map showed that he would only be allowed to travel freely in the Palestinian-controlled areas (Area A), but that his movements in Israeli-controlled areas (Area B) would be restricted for six months. Daraghma would thus have to stay in his village of Tubas because all territories between his village and other towns fell within Area B. (*Ha'aretz*, 10 February)

4. Imprisonment and conditions of imprisonment

104. On 22 August, the Knesset Law Committee rejected a bid to give prison authorities the right to ban visits to certain prisoners jailed for the duration of their legal proceedings. The General Security Service, the Prisons Service and the Minister for Internal Security, Shlomo Ben Ami, failed to convince the Committee that prison wardens should be allowed to disallow visits for three months in cases where a reasonable suspicion existed that the prisoner could use such visits for activities that might endanger State or public security. Ben Ami told the Committee that to date, heads of detention facilities had been authorized to ban visits to detainees in such cases. According to a recent court ruling, however, the cancellation of visitation rights had been permitted only when the authorities had prior knowledge of the visitor that would warrant it. The National Public Defender, Kenneth Mann, opposed the proposal, as did Knesset member Amnon Rubinstein, the Committee Chairman. Rubinstein accepted a proposal which would permit the prohibition of visits for a 14-day period, instead of 3 months, which could be renewed by court order. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 August)

105. On 9 September, Israel released 199 Palestinian security prisoners as part of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum it had signed with the Palestinian Authority the week before. All the prisoners released under the arrangement signed a commitment not to participate in terrorist activity. Ninety-five of the prisoners, residents of Gaza Strip, were set free at the Nahal Oz roadblock. The others, residents of the West Bank, were driven to various drop-off points. Some 155 of the prisoners released had been given life sentences for the murder of Palestinians accused of collaboration with Israel. Twenty-one of the prisoners were serving sentences for wounding Israelis in terror attacks. Contrary to previous reports, foreign prisoners from various Arab countries were not among those released. Only one prisoner, held in the Megiddo military jail, declined the early release and asked to complete his term. He had been set to be released in several days. Most of the prisoners were from the Fatah movement, some 35 were from the Popular Front of Liberation of Palestine and 20 were members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 10 September)

106. On 6 October, it was reported that Palestinian prisoners in two Israeli prisons had begun a protest against the prison administration for conducting a group punishment. According to the prisoners, who had reported to their lawyers, the authorities had decided to impose new, degrading conditions on them after finding and confiscating eight cellular telephones. According to the prisoners, the administration has renewed the custom — which had been stopped in 1992 — of performing strip searches of every detainee leaving and entering the prison. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 October)

107. On 6 October, the Israeli Cabinet quietly relaxed somewhat the criteria for the release of Palestinian prisoners, paving the way for releasing those who had committed unspecified crimes against Arabs after the Oslo Agreements, including a number belonging to Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Israel was scheduled to release 150 prisoners the day after on the occasion of the Prisoners Day in accordance with the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. (*Jerusalem Post*, 7 October)

108. On 7 October, the Prime Minister's office announced that Israel would delay the release of 150 prisoners scheduled for 8 October, after Palestinian negotiators had rejected the list it had proposed. Palestinian officers stated that they rejected Israel's new criteria. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 October)

109. On 15 October, Israel released another 151 Palestinian political prisoners, completing its commitment under the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. The release had been delayed by a week owing to differences over 35 names. The prisoners, who signed pledges of non-violence as a condition for their release,

were mostly Palestinians affiliated with the mainstream Fatah group, but also included citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, the Sudan and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, as well as members of Islamic Palestinian organizations. While 42 of the released prisoners had been involved in attacking and injuring Israelis, none of the attacks had resulted in fatalities. However, 38 of the freed prisoners had murdered fellow Palestinians for allegedly collaborating with Israeli authorities. Following the release of the prisoners, some 850 security prisoners still remained in Israeli jails and another 200 were awaiting trial. Another 1,000 Palestinians classified as criminals were also serving time in Israeli jails. Israel had promised to release additional prisoners in December to mark the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. (*Jerusalem Post*, 16 October)

110. On 29 November, it was reported that the Prison Service had withheld permission for a British physician to examine the condition of a Palestinian girl. For the past year, 16-year-old Suad Chilmi Gazal had been detained in Ramle awaiting termination of the legal procedures being conducted against her. She had been arrested in December 1998 under the suspicion of assaulting a female settler. Recently Gazal had begun to develop serious medical problems. Among them were severe headaches, persistent coughing and urinary tract infections. The prison office of public affairs stated that she was "under continual medical surveillance by the prison doctor and the prison medical clinic". Advocate Chaled Kosmar, Director of the Palestine Section of Defence of Children International, had visited the prisoner on 28 November and stated that Gazal was receiving no medical treatment other than Akamol (similar to aspirins) tablets. (*Ha'aretz*, 29 November)

111. On 29 December, it was reported that Israel had released as a goodwill gesture 26 security prisoners. The release represented the third batch of prisoners Israel had agreed to free in accordance with the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. The list was divided into three categories: 4 prisoners who had wounded Israelis; 8 who had murdered collaborators; and 12 who had committed other offences. Close to 2,000 Palestinians remained in Israeli jails, their fate to be decided in a final status agreement scheduled to be concluded by September 2000. The decision to release the present group of prisoners had come after long weeks of stalling and a meeting the previous week between Prime Minister Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. It was reported that the Palestinians were disappointed by the current release since they had expected a larger release of some 50 prisoners, and had wished to be consulted on the names. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 27, 28, 29 December)

112. On 30 December, for the first time since 1994, Israeli authorities released Palestinian prisoners from East Jerusalem, in a move timed as a Ramadan goodwill gesture. The seven released prisoners were taken to Jerusalem from Shata and Hasharon prisons, arrived in the afternoon at the Orient House, where they were greeted. Sources in Prime Minister Barak's office stated that the releases were in keeping with agreements Israel had signed with the Palestinian Authority. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 31 December)

113. On 5 January 2000, it was reported that an additional 22 Palestinian prisoners had been released as a goodwill gesture for Ramadan. According to the Prisons Services, 20 of the prisoners had been convicted of illegal entry into Israel and had been sentenced to up to a year in prison. The two other prisoners had been sentenced to 12 and 14 years respectively for murdering relatives. All the prisoners agreed to sign a document declaring that they would refrain from endangering Israel's security. Since October 1999, in accordance with the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, Israel had released 184 Arab security prisoners, beginning with the first batch of 151 on 15 October, and then in 2 separate batches on 28 and 30 December. Those released included members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, one of whom had murdered an Israeli. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 5 and 6 January)

114. On 26 January, a prominent Palestinian Authority minister accused the General Security Service of keeping close relatives of some 200 Palestinian prisoners from visiting their loved ones in jail. Palestinian Prisons Minister Hisham Abed a-Razak brought the issue to the attention of Israeli officials during talks held by the joint Israeli-Palestinian committee dealing with prisoners' releases. Abed a-Razak told reporters in Ramallah that at various times GSS had banned elder parents, wives and siblings of 200 prisoners from visiting. At least one close relative had been kept from each prisoner. GSS justified the policy on security grounds, but Abed a-Razak charged that the policy was an illegitimate pretext that violated the prisoners' rights. He added that the no-visiting

policy was instrumental in precipitating a strike the previous day by Palestinians in Israeli jails. He said that, according to Israeli data, 22 Palestinian prisoners were terminally ill. Their release on health grounds was mandated by the Oslo Agreement and yet they languished in prison. He demanded the release of other Palestinian prisoners, including three Palestinian female prisoners and seven men who had been incarcerated for more than 20 years. (*Ha'aretz*, 26 January)

5. Question of the use of force

115. On 15 September, it was reported that four members of the border police special surveillance unit, involved two years earlier in the brutal killing of a cat, had been expelled from their unit recently following a complaint by a Palestinian suspected of stealing a car, who said the soldiers had wrecked his home. Two years earlier, the four soldiers had tortured a cat in the unit's gym and killed it by crushing its skull with a weight. In April 1999, according to the complaint, during an operation meant to locate car thieves from the West Bank village of Shweike, the soldiers, including the four who had tortured and killed the cat, broke into the home of a man suspected of stealing a car, allegedly breaking furniture, smashing windows and kitchenware and destroying everything in the house. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 September)

116. On 17 September, it was reported that a Palestinian Authority man was shot trying to cross into Israel from the Gaza Strip. A large IDF force was called in after a hole had been found in the security fence between Nahal Oz and Erez junction. The force spotted five Palestinians who managed to enter Israeli territory carrying equipment that the soldiers considered suspicious. Three of the Palestinians escaped back into Palestinian Authority territory, one was shot, captured and hospitalized, and another was taken into custody. The five were believed to be job seekers, but the suspicion of terrorism remained. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 September)

117. On 18 September, it was reported that an Israeli policeman had shot a Palestinian after a chase in Emek Haela in which three men in a truck wearing IDF or border police shirts had tossed iron rods into the road as they tried to evade capture. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 September).

118. On 22 September, it was reported that the State Attorney's Office had filed an appeal with the Supreme Court to overturn the acquittal of the security coordinator of the Hadar Beitar settlement for killing an 11-year-old Palestinian boy three years earlier in the village of Hussan, near Bethlehem. The boy, Hilmi Shusha, had died in the hospital one day after being brought in unconscious. Nahum Korman was charged with manslaughter in Jerusalem District Court for having kicked Shusha in the neck while pursuing stone throwers, thus causing fatal bleeding in the boy's brain. The indictment had been based on the autopsy findings of Yehuda Hiss, head of the Institute of Forensic Medicine at Abu Kabir, and on two witnesses, the dead boy's cousins. Judge Ruth Orr found the cousins' testimonies to be riddled with contradictions, however, and concluded that they had not in fact even been present at the scene. As for the coroner's finding, she ruled that he had been anxious to find the cause of death and had based his conclusions on the testimony of the two cousins and had ignored the fact that there were no pathological findings to substantiate the testimony. In its appeal, the State contended that Korman had been acquitted even though no satisfactory alternative explanation had been offered that would account for the boy's death. The notion that a healthy boy would suddenly collapse in a manner that would cause fatal bleeding of the brain is blatantly unreasonable, the State argued. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 September)

119. On 3 October, it was reported that a Justice Ministry division on police conduct was investigating whether police gunshots had resulted in the death of a 28-year-old Palestinian and the wounding of another during a car chase two days before. Police claimed that they had fired warning shots in the air towards the victims' suspicious car after the two Palestinians, who were not armed, got out of their car and clashed with police. It later emerged that the Palestinians' car had been stolen the day before from an Israeli town. The two had previous police records for property violations. The Justice Ministry planned to determine whether the police had acted properly in shooting the unarmed suspect above the waist. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 October)

120. On 25 October, hundreds of Palestinian demonstrators hurled stones and bottles at Israeli soldiers near Rachel's Tomb after an Israeli soldier shot to death a Palestinian who he said had tried to stab

him. The riots broke out as rumours swept Bethlehem about the shooting of the assailant, who was identified as Mussa Abu Hilail, a 29-year-old divorced souvenir hawker and father of two. Soldiers used metal-coated rubber bullets and tear gas. It was reported that 15 demonstrators had been lightly injured. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 26 October)

121. On 26 October, it was reported that hundreds of Palestinian demonstrators had protested for the second day the death of Mussa Abu Hilail, who had been shot to death by an IDF soldier. In violent clashes during the day some 15 Palestinians had been wounded, one seriously. IDF soldiers had used rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators. Foreign Secretary Robin Cook of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was forced to cancel his visit to Bethlehem because of the unrest. Palestinians claimed that Hilail, who sold souvenirs to tourists, had been unarmed and had been summoned by the soldier, who shot him. The IDF denied the claims. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 27 October)

122. On 27 October, it was reported that 10 Palestinians and 1 IDF soldier had been wounded in a third day of clashes near Rachel's Tomb on the outskirts of Bethlehem. Foreign Minister David Lavy accused the Palestinian Authority of "not lifting a finger" to contain the violence. The unrest had ensued as some 200 Palestinians threw stones at IDF soldiers after breaking away from a funeral procession for Mousa Abu Hilaili, who had been shot and killed after allegedly trying to stab an Israeli soldier. He was buried in Beit Sahuor. News agencies reported that about 10 Palestinians had been hurt by metal-coated rubber bullets, including an Associated Press photographer, who had been struck in the back. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 October)

123. On 11 November, it was reported that a border policeman who had shot and wounded a child from Hebron in early May after the boy had refused to give him a ball he was playing with had been indicted by the Jerusalem District Court Attorney. Border policeman Saher Salaimeh had been charged with unjustifiably shooting and wounding 13-year-old Jawad el-Mohammed, who had been playing ball with his cousin, brother and sister. According to the testimony collected by B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, the four children had been playing in front of their home near the Tomb of the Patriarchs, which was surrounded by border policemen and soldiers. B'Tselem said that the Jerusalem District Attorney's decision to indict the soldier was unusual in the light of recent decisions to close more than half of the cases of shooting incidents opened in the previous year. The following are the statistics collected by B'Tselem about shooting incidents that ended in death or injury from April 1988 to date: five shooting incidents one year previously, two of which ended in death: cases closed without indictments; in three shooting incidents one year previously, two of which ended in death, no decisions have yet been made; in one death incident, the commander of the field corps recommended indicting, but the district attorney has not yet decided. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 November)

124. On 20 November, at least 10 Palestinians were injured when IDF soldiers opened fire to quell a demonstration on the outskirts of Ramallah. The protesters demanded the release of additional prisoners. In accordance with the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, Israel had recently released 350 Arab security prisoners in two groups. Ambulance drivers said that three of them had been taken to the hospital with bullet wounds. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 November)

125. On 13 December, two Palestinians who were being sought were killed in a clash with Israeli security forces near Beit Awa village some 20 kilometres from Hebron. There were no IDF casualties in the operation. According to an Israeli security source, one of those killed was believed to be Iyad Batat, allegedly the leader of a Hamas military wing, Issadin Kassam. Batat was believed to be the No. 1 terrorist on the Israel most-wanted list. The clash occurred when IDF troops entered Beit Awa, declared the area a closed military zone and imposed a curfew. The troops surrounded a house in which the two Palestinians were hiding, according to military sources. Neighbours reported hearing gunshots while helicopters hovered overhead and searched the area. The men were killed in an exchange of automatic weapons fire, which the soldiers ended by firing anti-tank rockets at the structure. Security sources arrested several Palestinians whose homes were believed to have been used by the two deceased Palestinians. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 14 December)

126. On 22 December, a 15-year-old Palestinian passenger riding in a passing bus at the El Aroub junction near Hebron was seriously injured when an IDF soldier fired rubber bullets. Sadi Jawabrah said

soldiers shot at the bus as it was going by and a bullet smashed through a window and hit him in the mouth, knocking out two teeth. The IDF spokesperson issued a statement saying action would be taken against the soldier who had failed to take into account the situation before firing his weapon, thus endangering passers-by. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 December)

127. On 20 January, it was reported that two days earlier, Law, the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, had held a press conference at the Grand Park Hotel in Ramallah, presenting a summary of the Law 1999 annual report on human rights violations in the Palestinian territories. According to Law, 19 Palestinians had been killed during 1999 by Israel, 7 of them by IDF, 1 by the Israeli police, 2 by settlers and 3, who were workers, were killed after being crushed by a car. Two people had died in Israeli prisons, two others had been killed as a result of landmine explosions and another two had died after being injured during the uprising (intifada). According to the Law annual report, Israel had confiscated 40,178 dunums of Palestinian land and 15,180 trees, mostly olive, almond and fig, had been uprooted or burned during the year. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 January)

128. On 28 February, Palestinian youths clashed with IDF soldiers during a demonstration near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem against the characterization of Hezbollah guerrillas as "terrorists" by French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin the previous week. The soldiers had fired rubber bullets and tear gas, wounding four Palestinians, after protesters threw stones at them. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 29 February)

129. On 29 February, it was reported that the Justice Ministry's internal affairs unit had decided that a Jerusalem police officer who had shot a Palestinian car thief at close range should be indicted for manslaughter. However, the unit had not recommended that another policeman, who had shot and injured the dead man's friend in the same incident, but from a great distance, should be indicted. Hader Badouan, 28, had been shot in the back at a range of 1 metre. According to the investigation, the lighting at the scene had been sufficient for the policeman to see that Badouan was unarmed. (*Ha'aretz*, 29 February)

6. Proposed law absolving persons of liability to compensate

130. On 9 September, it was reported that the Finance Ministry wished to set aside special compensation for Palestinians injured in the 1994 massacre at Machpela in Hebron. The Ministry had informed the Finance Committee of its intention to transfer NIS 1 million to the victims. The amount would be deducted from the total amount Israel paid the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the obligations of donor nations. Meanwhile, Hebron Mayor Mustafa Nasta had stated that, in Arabic, that type of compensation was called "Italian theft". Israel was trying to represent itself as generous, he said, but it was a generosity at someone else's expenses. "If the payment to the victims is deducted from the amount intended for the Palestinian Authority, then it is the Palestinian Authority who is paying", Nasta told *Ha'aretz*. He also said the sums intended for compensation were not worthy of attention. "Those injured in incidents or attacks in Israel should each receive a million shekels", he added. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 September)

D. Economic, social and cultural effects that such a general system of regulation and the manner of its enforcement has on the lives of the people of the occupied territories

Adults

131. On 23 August, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak had approved the recommendation regarding loosening restrictions on Palestinian workers and merchants entering Israel. This was expected to increase the number of Palestinian workers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to some 80,000. The new rules affected, inter alia, married workers from the age of 21 with security clearance (previously 23 had been the cut-off age), as well as married merchants from the age of 21 with security clearance. It was also decided to allow hundreds of Gazans over the age of 44 to travel to Al Haram Al Sharif (Temple Mount) in Jerusalem on Fridays to worship. The Defence Ministry stated that the steps were aimed at improving the economic and social conditions of Palestinians. Currently, some 70,000 Palestinians from Gaza Strip and the West Bank have labour permits, but another 40,000 sneak in without permits. In the late 1980s the

Palestinian labour force in Israel had numbered over 100,000. According to defence officials, 17 per cent of employed Palestinians from the Gaza Strip worked in Israel, but they accounted for over 40 per cent of the earned income there. The statistic is about the same in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 24 August)

132. On 24 August, it was reported that IDF was worried that worsening conditions for travellers at the Allenby Bridge crossing from Jordan to the Palestinian Authority and Israel could lead to violence, as people waited in 40-degree heat for four to six hours and directed their rage towards both Palestinian and Israeli officials on the scene. The terminal's complex bureaucratic procedures, combined with rising numbers of travellers, was resulting in unbearable conditions. Palestinians controlled the terminal, but Israel was responsible for security, so while Palestinian Authority officials took passports from travellers, hidden Israeli clerks approved or rejected the travellers. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 August)

133. On 10 December, it was reported that Palestinian activists were launching a campaign to shut down an Israeli feed additives plant in Tulkarm which they said posed an environmental and health hazard to the area. At a conference in Tulkarm organized by the Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy and attended by other NGOs, a resolution was passed calling upon Jordan to boycott the factory of Keshet Prima Feed Additives Ltd., just beyond the Green Line, in a portion of the Palestinian city under full Israeli control. The campaign began just one month after Suha Arafat had stunned journalists and visiting United States First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton by blaming Israel for a host of environmental and health problems. Arafat had said 80 per cent of Palestinian water was contaminated by Israel and that this "caused widespread disease". The Environmental Ministry spokesperson stated that in the early years of the factory, which had moved to the new Tulkarm Industrial Zone in 1985, problems had been noted in terms of air pollution and storage of dangerous materials. However, according to the Ministry spokesperson, "these were corrected and today its operation is perfectly fine". "I don't trust their tests", said city engineer Rayeq Hamad. "All the officials believe the factory is situated in Tulkarm because Israelis would be unwilling to tolerate it within the Green Line." In the field behind the factory, vegetable farmer Fayez Oude said that a worker he had hired quit after three days because of the chemical smell. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 December)

Children

134. On 20 February, it was reported that young Palestinian children were working in the western Negev under harsh conditions and for very low wages. "It is slavery", said Netivot Police Chief Rehavia Umasi, who three days earlier had arrested 28 Palestinians without permits to be in Israel, 25 of them minors. The arrest was part of police effort to prevent property offences and to locate residents of the territories in Israel without permits. The 25 children, whose ages ranged from 10 to 14, had been released after being questioned by police and taken to the West Bank. According to Umasi, many Jewish settlements within the State of Israel employed children and youth from the Hebron area. He said that hundreds of children were brought to fields at 4 a.m. and worked until 5 p.m., with barely any food. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 February)

E. General sense of hopelessness and despair

Other

135. On 22 August, it was reported that Justice Minister Yossi Beilin was initiating far-reaching changes to the proposed General Security Service law, which he said was too vague in defining GSS authority. Beilin stated he had doubts about certain articles in the bill, which passed the full Knesset in first reading the previous year, that gave GSS very broad authority. For example, one article stated that the service was entrusted with the preservation of State security, democratic order and its institutions from terrorist threats. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 August)

136. On 30 August, it was reported that the IDF had decided to toughen its dealings with Palestinians caught committing traffic violations in the West Bank and confiscate cars from Palestinian traffic offenders who did not pay their traffic fines. The Palestinian Authority had denounced the new step, which it considered too harsh. Such a harsh policy was not enforced anywhere within the borders of Israel proper. On 13 September, Tourism Minister Amnon Lipkin-Shahak visited Bethlehem and, together with his Palestinian counterpart, Mitri Abu-Aita, sought to

solve the problem of the passage of tourists between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. At times, pilgrims had been unable to visit Bethlehem and at other times they had been subject to long delays or had been forced to travel by circuitous routes. (*Jerusalem Post*, 14 September)

137. On 20 September, Minister for Jerusalem Affairs Haim Ramon met with his Palestinian Authority counterpart, Faisal Husseini. Ramon requested Husseini to fulfil agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, especially with regard to Orient House, which Israel barred from holding diplomatic meetings. They also discussed easing conditions for Palestinians living in the city. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 21 September)

138. On 5 October, it was reported that the High Court of Justice had given the State 45 days to justify the state of emergency in effect which granted the Government unconstitutional powers. In doing so, the court was responding to a request for a show-cause order by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), which had submitted a petition calling for the abolition of the state of emergency which had been in effect continuously since the State had come into being. ACRI had argued that the State had taken advantage of the situation since 1948 in order to infringe on human rights and the rule of law. The state of emergency enabled the authorities to introduce emergency regulations that replaced laws enacted by the Knesset and to validate draconian emergency laws. (*Jerusalem Post*, 5 October)

139. On 10 October, it was reported that the Petah Tekva Magistrates Court had extended the remand of three Alon Moreh settlers on suspicion of attacking a 55-year-old Palestinian man from Kafr Salem. A police spokesperson stated that the three would be charged. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 October)

140. On 19 October, Israeli security forces arrested the Palestinian who had attacked an IDF soldier during a riot by scores of Palestinians at the Ayosh junction the previous December, according to an IDF spokesperson. Nabil Hamoud was arrested when he entered Israel illegally and confessed to taking the soldier's gun, the spokesperson stated. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 October)

141. On 21 October, it was reported that at a meeting of the Jerusalem Regional Planning Committee, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert had said that the most important task in the coming years was to increase the numbers of the Jewish inhabitants within the city limits. He had also said it was important to include "green areas", open areas for parks or nature reserves, in the plans. He had made little mention of any particular vision to develop the eastern part of the city, whose infrastructure was in dire straits. Over the coming year, the Steering Committee, in conjunction with the Jerusalem Regional Planning Committee, was to research and develop an official plan. Building was to begin at the end of 2000 and continue through 2020. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 October)

142. On 21 October, the High Court of Justice confirmed that Israel's courts would not hear suits submitted by the Palestinians against the State or any of its institutions if they related to areas of responsibility subsequently transferred to the Palestinian Authority, in accordance with clauses 7 and 8 of the bill on implementation of the Interim Agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The Court had made this clear by rejecting two petitions submitted by two Palestinian families from Hebron, calling for the scrapping of those clauses. The main claim raised by the petitioners was that they would not be given a fair hearing in the Palestinian judiciary, but the High Court had ruled it had not been presented with any real evidence to support the claim. The two petitioning families had filed suits in the district courts of Jerusalem and Haifa requesting punitive damages for faulty treatment they had received in an Israeli/Civil Administration hospital in the West Bank. Although the suits had been submitted before the law on implementing the Interim Agreement had gone into effect, the hearing had not begun. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 October)

143. On 24 October, it was reported that Egypt and Jordan were planning to hold a meeting in Ramallah with officials of the Palestinian Authority to discuss the Palestinian refugee issue and coordinate positions in advance of the final talks, a Palestinian Authority source close to the negotiations stated. A spokesperson for the Israeli Foreign Ministry stated that Foreign Minister David Lavy saw no reason for him to attend such a meeting since the refugee issue was to be discussed in committees, not on the ministerial level. Israeli sources had stated that Prime Minister Ehud Barak was also working on the refugee issue, and that he was especially interested in ideas drawn up by Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Arafat's deputy Mahmoud Abbas. They were apparently suggesting that Palestinian refugees should be allowed to return to

the Palestinian areas without Israel's approval. The two had apparently discussed setting up an Israeli fund to help resettle the refugees as a form of compensation. Israel refused to allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in Israel proper, and it had said it wanted a say in how many 1967 refugees would be allowed to return to the Palestinian Authority territories. The position of the Palestinian Authority officials was that the Palestinians should be allowed to return to their homes whether in Israel or the Palestinian areas. The Palestinian Authority also wanted Israel to compensate the 1948 refugees who did not want to return to their homes in Israel and demanded that Israel pay compensations to all refugees for their suffering and economic losses. (*Jerusalem Post*, 24 October)

144. On 28 October, it was reported that a plan to supply an additional five megawatts of electricity to Gaza that had been shelved for three years had been recently approved by Prime Minister Barak. Major General Ya'acov Orr, the government coordinator of activities in the occupied territories, had met with Jamil Tarif, the Palestinian Authority Minister of Civil Affairs, to discuss implementation. The line was to be operating in three weeks and would greatly alleviate the frequent power cuts that had been occurring in the region. In addition, by July 2000 the first high-tension line was to be operating between Israel and the Gaza Strip, supplementing the Palestinians' first power station. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 October)

145. On 1 November, it was reported that a first study ever to be carried out on cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians in the health field had revealed strong support and cooperation. The landmark research, conducted by the JDC-Brookdale Institute and Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, had studied 148 cooperative projects involving 68 different organizations. At a seminar to discuss the study, participants had examined bilateral projects on training research, service development and service provision carried out by non-governmental service organizations, universities and human rights organizations. (*Jerusalem Post*, 1 November)

146. On 2 November, it was reported that a high-ranking security official had told the *Jerusalem Post* that the wholesale market situated near Hebron's Avraham Avinu quarter would remain closed until the Palestinian Authority met Israel's demands, including for building a wall separating the market from the entrance to the Jewish quarter. Meanwhile police had prevented Peace Now activists from reaching Hebron, where they planned to show support for the peace process and the opening of Shuhada Street to Palestinian vehicles and to protest the failure to open the wholesale market. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 November)

147. On 3 November, Jewish Agency Chairman Sallai Meridor responded harshly to the proposed Knesset bill that would amend the Citizenship Law to grant automatic citizenship to first-degree relatives of all Israeli citizens, thus easing the naturalization of thousands of Palestinians. The bill was announced by Knesset member Ahmad Tibi (Balad). Meridor said that the proposed amendment would "prevent Israel from maintaining its Jewish character, the very basis of the State". (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 November)

148. On 14 November, it was reported that Israel had decided to relax security checks on Jordanian goods delivered to the West Bank and allow Jordanian trucks to enter the West Bank directly without transferring to Palestinian trucks at the border passage. Israel had previously rejected any such possibility for security reasons. (*Ha'aretz*, 14 November)

149. On 29 November, following a meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Prime Minister Ehud Barak said that no Palestinian refugee would be resettled in Israel under the final status agreement. He told reporters that he assumed that an international agency would be established to resettle refugees in the Palestinian entity, but that Israel would not be taking any responsibility for the refugees. He said that the final status agreement would put an end to the demands for the return of refugees to Israel. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 30 November)

150. On 2 December, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak had decided not to object to the opening of a new entrance to an underground prayer hall in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on the Temple Mount, according to his spokesperson. The previous summer, Barak had moved swiftly to seal an opening which Muslim clerics had made in the outer wall of the compound, saying it was a violation of the status quo. According to reports, Barak felt that the new exit was necessary for safety reasons. Officials in the Waqf (Islamic trust) said they had opened the entrance without awaiting Barak's decision. Waqf Director Adnan Husseini said the exit would be ready by the next holy month of Ramadan, during which mosques were especially crowded. Husseini said the Waqf had

first tried to open the exit during the previous year's Ramadan, but had been barred to do so by the Government. However, it was reported in *Ha'aretz* that Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein, at a debate hosted by Internal Security Minister Shlomo Ben Ami focusing on the work recently undertaken by the Waqf, had opposed the opening of the new exit, saying, inter alia, that "we have a tolerance for ritual, but we must tell the Waqf and the Muslims that we too have a history. You will not trample our history." (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 December)

151. On 2 December, it was reported that Israel had agreed to allow the return of several thousand Palestinian refugees currently living in Egypt to the area controlled by the Palestinian Authority in Gaza. The agreement referred to the Canada refugee camp in the town of Rafah on the Gaza-Sinai border. After the 1967 Six-Day War, many of the camp's inhabitants had crossed the old international border with Egypt and taken up residence on the Egyptian side of the border. Following the signing of the Camp David accords in 1978, the camp, which in the meantime had grown larger, had been split in two and thousands of residents had remained in the area that was returned to Egypt. According to Israeli security sources, the move involved a prior commitment and had nothing to do with the debate over the right of return of Palestinian refugees or the absorption of refugees in the territories of the Palestinian Authority. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 December)

152. On 11 January 2000, it was reported that the Palestinian negotiators had reiterated their demand for the "right of return" at the current year's first official session of the final status talks, saying that Israel must allow 3.7 million Palestinian refugees and their offspring to return to their homes. "The Palestinians demand the right of return for all 1948 refugees, and compensation for those who do not want to return to Israel", Yasser Abed Rabbo, Palestinian chief negotiator, had stated after the meeting with the Israeli negotiators in Ramallah. Israeli negotiators still rejected the idea of Palestinians returning to their homes inside Israel, Abed Rabbo said. The Israeli chief negotiator, Oded Eran, had refused to speak to reporters after the meeting. However, Israeli sources said that Prime Minister Barak was considering a compromise based on ideas discussed in the past between Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's deputy, Mahmoud Abbas. The two had discussed setting up an Israeli compensation fund to help the Palestinian Authority resettle Palestinian refugees in the areas. Israel would not limit the number of refugees permitted to return to the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas, but would demand that the Palestinian Authority give up the refugees' claim of right of return to Israel. (*Jerusalem Post*, 11 January)

153. On 12 January, it was reported that, according to a bill submitted by a Likud Knesset member and co-signed by another 60 Knesset members, the return of Palestinian refugees would require approval by two thirds of the Knesset. The Likud Knesset member who had initiated the bill said the law needed to be passed soon, since Israel and the Palestinians had launched final status talks that would include discussions on the status of refugees from the 1948 and the 1967 wars. Under the bill, the Government would be forbidden to make any commitment or agreement on the right of return without conditioning it on the approval of 80 Knesset members. The bill would allow the issuance of up to 100 permits annually for refugees to return based on humanitarian reasons. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 January)

154. On 16 January, it was reported that widespread arrests of Islamic Jihad activists in the West Bank suspected of planning terror attacks in Israel had been carried out by IDF forces and the General Security Service in the previous week. Security forces said over a score had been arrested during the crackdown, adding that 20 activists had been arrested several days earlier in the Jenin, Ramallah and Hebron areas. (*Jerusalem Post*, 16 January)

155. On 18 January, it was reported that Israeli police had arrested two Palestinians from the village of Al-Fawar in the southern Hebron Hills, in Area B (under Israeli security control and Palestinian civil control), whom they suspected of dealing in arms. During the arrest of suspects, security forces had confiscated four pistols, two rifles, 10 magazines and hundreds of bullets. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 January)

156. On 25 January, Israeli soldiers prevented construction work at a public garden in Khan Younis. The site had been used as a garbage dump. Khan Younis Mayor Usama Fara said that the measure by the army contradicted the peace accords. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 January)

157. On 28 January, it was reported that a new study by the European Commission on economic relations

between Israel and the Palestinian areas suggested that trust and cooperation were missing in this relationship, which accounted for the current strained economic relations. It also claimed that Israel had transferred to the Palestinian Authority funds collected in taxes on goods and labour, when in reality Israel had withheld those taxes since 1996. Israel and the Palestinians had held intensive talks to resolve this matter but to date they had been unable to bridge the gap between them. The report, entitled "Evaluating the Paris Protocol", reviews the Paris Economic Protocol signed between the PLO and Israel in 1994 and discusses the success and failures of the Protocol with reference to each of the four economic blocs singled out in it: labour issues, trade relations, fiscal issues and monetary arrangements. The Protocol advocated the normality of movement, by which it was seeking to maintain regular Palestinian employment in Israel but subject to Israeli discretion. The report said that in the short run, it was essential for Palestinian workers to have access to the Israeli labour market if massive unemployment and poverty in the Palestinian territories were to be avoided. Had the parties shown trust and cooperation, according to the report, the Protocol would have provided the framework for the mutually beneficial employment of Palestinians in Israel. With regard to trade issues, the report said that the most essential requirement for the development of the Palestinian territories in the longer term was free access to the outside world for trade purposes. The Paris Protocol had advocated this and set up a customs union, between Israel and the Palestinian Authority areas, with some caveats. But things had not worked out as hoped and trade had stagnated, according to the report. The main problems lay once again with border closures and related Israeli security concerns. As to the fiscal transfers, the report said that, according to the Paris Protocol, part of the money paid by the Palestinian workers working in Israel should be transferred to the Palestinian Authority because it provided the benefits that the taxes usually financed. Money paid as purchase tax for imports should also be returned, because, as agreed, liability was calculated according to the destination principle in trade. The report also claimed that in the case of social security transfers, large amounts of money in Israel were awaiting the setting up of the relevant Palestinian institutions before they would be transferred. This included the pension contributions of Palestinian workers in Israel. The report recommended that the Palestinian Authority should speed up setting up these institutions. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 January)

158. On 25 January, it was reported that IDF troops had arrested seven Palestinians from the Kalandia refugee camp near Ramallah suspected of being involved in stoning cars and security forces on the Jerusalem-Ramallah road. The IDF spokesperson said that the seven (all except one were in their early 20s), were not affiliated with any terrorist organization. (*Jerusalem Post*, 26 January)

159. On 20 February, it was reported that the sewage system of homes in the West Bank settlement of Adam, east of the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Neve Yaacov, was seriously contaminating the springs feeding into Wadi Kelt, causing a stench and killing animal life, according to an investigation by the Nature Reserves and National Parks Authority. The contamination of Wadi Kelt, some parts of which were controlled by Israel and others by the Palestinian Authority, had been spreading, and there was concern in some quarters that it could reach the Ein Kelt spring, at the eastern end of the Kelt stream. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 February)

160. On 26 February, Papal Nuncio Pietro Sambi justified Vatican demands for international guarantees for the holy places in Jerusalem by suggesting that Israel was denying religious freedom to Palestinians by not allowing them free access to Jerusalem at all times. Speaking in an interview on Channel 1, Sambi was reacting to criticisms of the agreement between the Holy See and the Palestinians, which included a call for such guarantees. "You know that not all Muslims from Gaza can go to [Al-Aqsa] Mosque and not all Christians from Bethlehem can go to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre whenever they want to", Sambi said. (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 February)

III. Situation of human rights in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan

161. On 17 September, it was reported that more than 100 religious leaders from the Golan Heights had complained that Israel security personnel had treated them disrespectfully when they had crossed the border from the Syrian Arab Republic the day before. Personal items including holy books had been tossed to the ground and holy objects had been confiscated, the Sheikh said. (*Ha'aretz*, 17 September)

162. On 23 September, it was reported that, according to Golan Regional Council head Yehuda Wolman, a new neighbourhood of 52 homes was to be built in the Golan Heights. The homes slated for the Bnei Yehuda settlement were to be erected by private contractors. The Housing Ministry spokesperson stated that the project had been approved by the previous Government of Netanyahu. He also said that the Government had begun cutting State funds — $2.5 million in 1999 and $22 million in the 2000 budget — that had been earmarked for the Golan settlements. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 23 September)

163. On 29 September, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak had told visitors that any agreement with the Syrian Arab Republic would require "some painful concessions" on Israel's part. "I can tell you that there is no formula worked out yet which will allow for the resumption of talks with Syria", Barak was quoted as saying, "but I don't want to mislead anybody, for an agreement with Syria means very painful concessions on the Golan Heights." It was reported that the Golan residents committee was planning to bring 1 million visitors to the region in coming months as part of a campaign to win public support against any withdrawal from the Golan. (*Jerusalem Post*, 29 September)

164. On 8 October, it was reported that the Golan Heights settlements were to be classified "priority area A" in the Government's new map of priority areas, which had been put together over the last month in the Prime Minister's office. Prime Minister Barak had confirmed this information to *Ha'aretz*. According to Barak, the government map of national priority areas would include the Negev, the Galilee, the Jordan Valley, poor neighbourhoods of the large cities and the Golan Heights settlements, which would receive an additional allocation of funds to ensure their security in wake of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. (*Ha'aretz*, 8 October)

165. On 11 November, it was reported that the Katzrin local council was planning the construction of a new hotel in Katzrin. The Israel Land Administration has been asked to allocate land for the hotel and a private developer had agreed to build it. The project had been proposed three years earlier, but later dropped. Sami Bar Liv, Mayor of Katzrin, stated that "Katzrin is an excellent city for tourism, and I don't think there will be any problem, although bureaucratic problems can always come up". (*Ha'aretz*, 11 November)

166. On 15 December, Knesset member Saleh Tarif called upon Prime Minister Barak to rescind the citizenship of several hundred persons from the Golan Heights who had been attempting to return their identity cards. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 16 December)

167. On 3 January 2000, it was reported that, one hour before leaving the United States for talks with the Syrian delegation, Prime Minister Barak had met with members of the "National Council for the Golan". According to reports, he had assured the settlers that the only agreement Israel would sign was one that strengthened the country's security. The assessment in One Israel party circles was that Barak's meetings with opponents of a Golan withdrawal before each round of negotiations were aimed at foreign consumption and were meant to send a tough message to the Syrian Arab Republic and others. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 January)

168. On 3 January, it was reported that activists had organized a rally in Magdal Shams to send a message to negotiators that Israel should release 17 prisoners. During the rally, a crowd of 300 people had listened to the Syrian national anthem. "Israel used to punish those who hoisted the Syrian flag, but now it ignores us because Israel was forced to admit that the Golan Heights are part of Syria", said Yaman Abu Jabal, 33, who had served 12 years in Israeli prisons for blowing up army weapon stores. The Syrian flag, banned for decades, fluttered in the streets of Magdal Shams without triggering a tough reaction by the Israeli police. Most activists welcome their return to the Syrian Arab Republic because they would be able to reunite with their relatives. Fahkr El-Din said that his fiancée Kamilya had been forced to leave the Golan Heights after he had been arrested in 1974. "She is now a professor at Damascus University. She would be stupid if she is still waiting for me", said El-Din, who has since married and now has children. Attalah Al-Wali may not be able to visit his son in an Israeli prison if Israel does not release him as part of the future agreement with the Syrian Arab Republic. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 3 January)

169. On 13 January, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak wanted the Syrian Arab Republic to permit Israeli settlers on the Golan Heights to remain in their homes even after the signing of a peace treaty and the transfer of the territory to Syrian sovereignty, as could be inferred from the draft peace treaty that the

United States had submitted the week before to the parties in the Shepherdstown talks. A copy of the document had been made available to *Ha'aretz*. An authoritative political source had confirmed that Barak believed that Israelis were entitled to live in the Golan, just as Arabs lived in Israel. (*Ha'aretz*, 13 January)

170. On 14 February, a demonstration by hundreds of persons from the Golan Heights in Majdal Shams turned violent when protesters hurled stones at police, who responded by firing plastic bullets and tear gas. The demonstration was marking the 1981 strike to protest the Government's decision to issue them identity cards following the extension of Israeli law to the Golan. A six-week strike had been staged at the time as part of their refusal to accept the Israeli ID cards, and the events had been marked by them on the same day ever since. The current demonstration started when hundreds of protesters congregated in the main square in Majdal Shams. Unlike previous years, police were not out in force in the village square, although they did monitor the proceedings from the outskirts of the town. According to local residents, two individuals were hurt and another was overcome by tear gas. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 15 February)

171. On 23 February, it was reported that Israel had approved the construction of 27 new vacation cottages on the Golan Heights and would continue building as long as no agreement had been conducted with the Syrian Arab Republic, according to an aide to Prime Minister Barak who was speaking to reporters. In addition to the 27 vacation cottages in Kibbutz Kfar Haruv, the director-general of the Prime Minister's office, Yossi Kucik, said that more building plans would be released in the near future. (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 February)